

The Oxford Treasury of English Literature

Vol. I :. Old English to Jacobean

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PREFACE

THIS is the first of three volumes the object of which is to indicate, so far as the limits of space permit, the chief landmarks in the progress of English literature. They are intended primarily for students who wish to look at the subject in general perspective before proceeding to a closer and more detailed survey of special forms or periods. Vol. I traces the course of prose and poetry (other than dramatic) from *Beowulf* to the writers of the Jacobean age; Vol. II will follow the history of the English drama to the same terminal limit; Vol. III will take up the record at the time of Milton and will continue it to that of Tennyson and Browning. The method of each will be the selection of characteristic examples, with such brief introductions, critical, explanatory, or biographical, as the occasion seems to require.

In the work of selection there are two obvious alternatives. One is to cite the largest possible number of authors, with a short extract from each: the other is to restrict the number of illustrations and proportionately to widen their extent. The former has certain historical advantages: it covers a broader area, it gives a greater variety; but it is open to the accusation, often levelled at anthologies, that it has 'been at a feast of learning and stolen away the

scraps'. The latter affords, at any rate in the earlier centuries, a truer and more comprehensive picture of literary development, and it has accordingly been adopted in the present volume. The extracts from *Beowulf*, from *Sir Gawayn*, and from the works of Chaucer, Malory, and Spenser, have been made on a scale as far as possible commensurate with their importance: and the principle here illustrated has, except for one consideration, been maintained throughout.

This consideration is the awakening of literary interest. Many authors are here omitted because, though historically significant, they belong to a later and more advanced course of study. Of these Langland is perhaps the most conspicuous instance. *Piers Ploughman* is a work with which, in the long run, all students of English literature must needs reckon: it is not a work which will help the beginner to a real love and appreciation of our poetry. Accordingly it finds here little more than the bare mention, and its period and movement are represented by *Sir Gawayn*, which, in a sense less typical, is unquestionably more attractive. The same holds good in regard of the Homilies, the Chronicles, and the distinctively scientific and philosophical writings. To the historian all are important: to the student of literature as such it is better that attention be concentrated on works of higher intrinsic beauty or of more direct social portraiture.

It may be objected that, from this point of view, insufficient space has been allotted to the early lyrics, and undue space to Gower, Lydgate, and even

Sackville. But in the first place the early lyrics are difficult to read, and all the best of them have been made accessible in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*. It has therefore seemed enough for our purpose to select those which most clearly exhibit the different modes of expression and to leave the task of further investigation to the reader. In the second place Gower and Lydgate are absolutely necessary as offsets to Chaucer: and the examples quoted from them have been selected with as much reference to his work as to their own real interest and value. And thirdly, Sackville, needed for a due appreciation of Spenser, deserves full inclusion on his own account, both for the severity of his style and for the special way in which he illustrates the effect of the Italian Renaissance. Indeed we are far more concerned to regret the poets whom we have been obliged to omit than to apologize for any whose writings we have here inserted.

In the examples of Old English—*Beowulf*, *Cynewulf*, Alfred—and in the deliberate antiquarian revival of *Sir Gawayn*, we have replaced the originals by translations. The language is so remote from our own that no modification in detail would be of any service, and the exact transcription would have been as alien as a foreign tongue. In this matter we desire to offer all cordial acknowledgements to Miss Moore, who has aided and enriched our work by allowing us to make use of her own. From thenceforward a double problem confronted us. We felt that it would be unscholarly to present Chaucer in the spelling of the twentieth century,

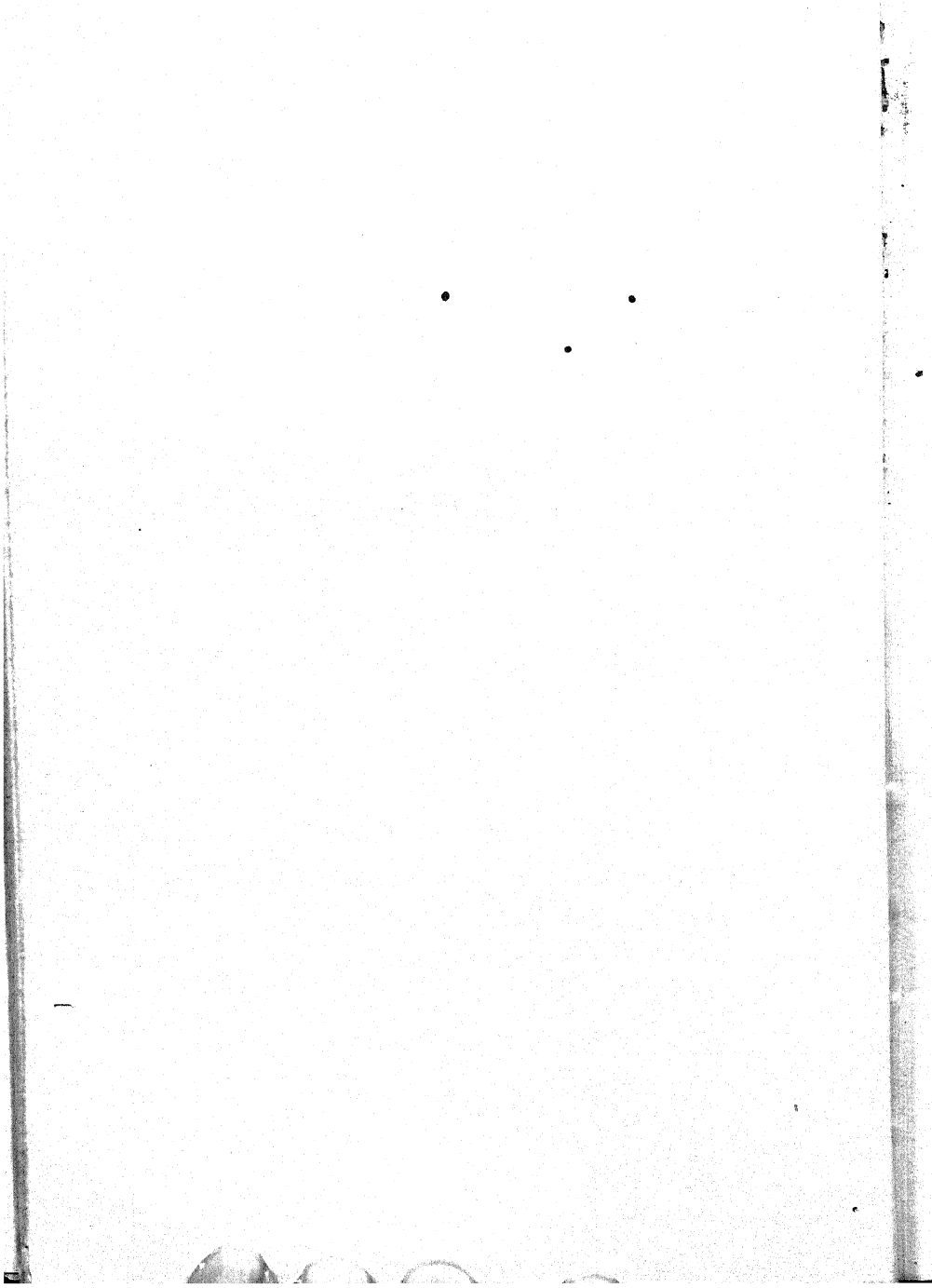
and pedantic to present Shakespeare in that of the sixteenth: between the two some line of demarcation had to be drawn, and we therefore placed it at the point which seemed to be indicated by common sense. Up to Lydgate and Occleve the old spelling is retained because it is frequently required by rhyme and metre: in mediaeval prose and in poetry, from Skelton onwards, it is discarded as no longer necessary. To the latter rule Spenser is the single exception, and the reason in his case is too obvious to need remark. For purposes of teaching we would suggest that the examples in Chapters II, III, V, and VI be read aloud before they are studied from the printed page. Their sound will prove more familiar to the ear than their freedom of orthography to the eye.

There is one more point to which attention may be drawn. One of the worst of the *Idola tribus* is, as Bacon says, an excessive love of symmetry and exactitude. We are far too liable to arrange our facts in neat classes and categories and to impose on nature schemes of our own devising. Against this mistake readers of the present volume may at the outset be warned. It has, of course, been necessary to group the examples under separate heads, to arrange them in chapters, and to put forward certain leading principles in the light of which this arrangement can be explained. But it must not be inferred that the history of our literature can be pigeon-holed and systematized with such formal precision. Many of the chapters overlap:—Barbour and Mandeville, for instance, were both contemporary with

Chaucer:—and in the stream of our literary progress there are many examples of ebb and flow, of eddy and backwash, which could not be fully described without swelling our pages to twice their number. All that is here attempted is to give the chief ideas by which successive generations were in the main inspired, to illustrate them with such fullness as should render them intelligible, and to place them as nearly in chronological order as is compatible with their clearness of presentation. The work, in short, is not a history of literature but a statement of literary aims and methods; and it will have achieved its purpose if it helps to determine the point of view from which the history can most profitably be studied.

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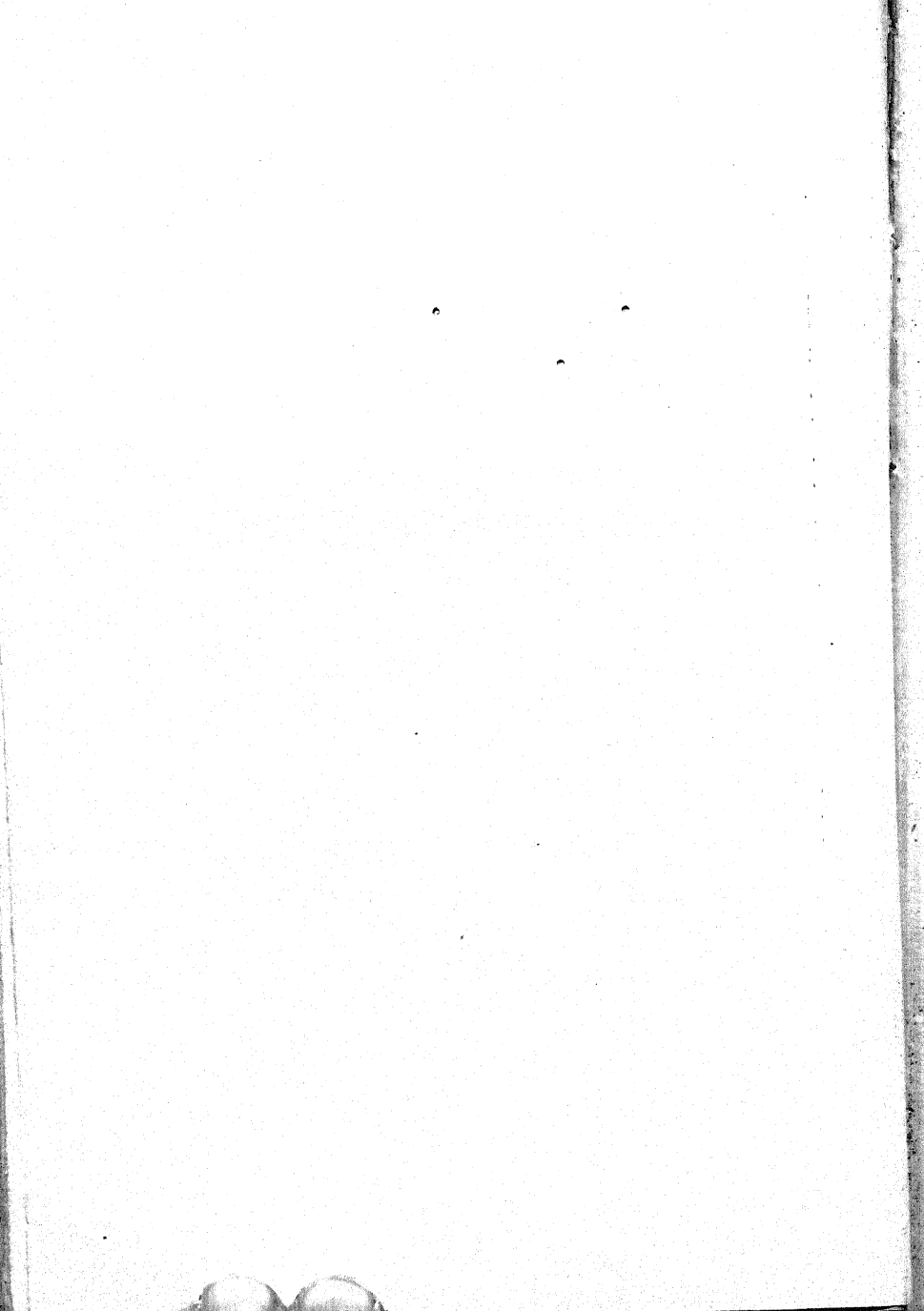
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CHAPTER I

OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE survey of any historical period must needs take an arbitrary point of departure. The closer we press our investigations the more clearly do we see that the apparent origins are really derivative: there were brave men before Agamemnon, there were poets before Homer, and the earliest known document complains of a degenerating age. There needs, therefore, no apology for beginning our illustrations of English Literature with our first great national epic. Before it assumed the form in which we have it Cædmon had written his paraphrase and Ealdhelm his songs; among its contemporaries are such descriptive poems as the *Wanderer* and the *Seafarer*; but it remains the greatest example of pre-Conquest poetry, the most typical representative of Old English art. In its present form it consists of two main portions, the earlier written in Mercia, the later in Kent, both probably dating from the eighth century, both incorporating lays which may perhaps be traced back as early as the fifth¹. These lays may in all likelihood have come to us from the Baltic shores, among which the whole scenery of the poem is set, and have been fused into a continuous epic by English scribes. At any rate it is noticeable that although the whole poem is English in language, in feeling, and in style, it says no word from beginning to end about our nation and country. Yet it became so thoroughly

¹ Müllenhoff holds that there were two original poems, (1) the fight with Grendel, (2) the fight with the fire-drake, both augmented by the interpolations and additions of four more successive authors. Ten Brink holds that there were several primitive versions which were somewhat carelessly edited by a scribe of the eighth century.

naturalized that it determined the growth of our English speech, and even took root in some of our place-names. A charter of Athelstane, two centuries later, mentions Grendel's pool, and Scyld's tree, and Beowa's land in its description of a single Wiltshire estate. They had become as real as Stonehenge or Amesbury.

The poem is partly historic, partly mythological. We can have little doubt that Beowulf was a real hero, a great warrior whose exploits were celebrated round the camp-fire; but some episodes appear to be derived from myths of Beowa, the sun-god, with whom it is very probable that he was confused. It is as full of fighting as the *Iliad*, and, in Mr. Stopford Brooke's phrase, tells its story 'with Homeric directness but not with Homeric rapidity'. There is little portrayal of emotion, and the most passionate moment is Wiglaf's denunciation of his fellow thanes for cowardice in time of need. There is practically no love interest: only once (in the story of Freawaru and Ingeld) does a woman play any prominent part: there is no Andromache, no Nausicaa, no Penelope waiting beside her loom. All the story is concentrated on the vivid presentation of manly deed and adventure, sometimes told with great pictorial power (as the bale-fire, or the hall of Grendel's mother), more often fashioned with a strong plainness and simplicity in which every word rings like the clash of arms. It is the picture of a hard and toilsome life, with few pleasures except rough feasting, few joys except the fierce delight of battle; it is set in a gloomy land where monsters make ravage and the storms shatter against the cliff, and over all hangs the grey pitiless northern sky.

The metre is peculiarly English: a line of four 'stresses' divided (like the Latin pentameter) into two parts, of which the second has less metrical variety than the first. The number of unaccented syllables is allowed, within limits, to fluctuate: the usual rules

are that four syllables should bear the main accents of the voice, and that the first three of them should begin with the same letter. There is no rhyme (except very rarely between the middle and the end of a line): its place is taken by this careful system of alliteration. We may exhibit its characteristics by quoting a few lines from the beginning of our first extract, *with as literal a version as modern English admits:

Fyrst forð gewāt : flota wæs on fōðum,
 bāt under george. Beornas gearwe
 on stefn stigon ; streāmas wundon,
 sund wið sande ; secgas bæron
 on bearm nacan beorhte frætwe,
 gūð-searo geatolic ; guman ūt seufon,
 weras on wil-sið wudu bundenne.
 Gewāt þā ofer wæg-holm winde gefȳsed
 flota fāmig-heals fugle gelicost,
 oð þæt ymb antīd oðres dōgores
 wunden-stefna gewaden hæfde,
 þæt þā ličende land gesāwon,
 brim-clifu blican, beorgas steāpe,
 sīde sǣ-nessas : þā wæs sund liden,
 eoletes æt ende. þanon up hraðe
 Wedera leóde on wang stigon,
 sǣ-wudu sǣldon (syrca hrysedon,
 gūð-gewādo) ; gode þancedon
 þæs þe him fōð-lāde eāðe wurdon.

Forth fled the hours : floated on the waves
 The ship cliff-sheltered : shield-bearers ready
 Stood at the stem : the streaming waters
 Brake upon the beach : men bore the treasure
 To the bark's bosom : bright and costly
 With wealth of weapons : on willing journey
 The boat iron-bound was borne to seaward.
 Through white-capped waves wind-driven ever
 She flew foam-throated as flits a bird,
 Till at dawn of day the distant coasts
 Of the land longed-for loomed before them

With hills and headlands high and gleaming.
Then the firth-faring was forthwith ended,
The boat fast-bound : boldly the Weders
Clasped the cliff and climbed to the plainland :
They shook out their shirts of shining armour,
And gave grace to God who had granted them passage.

It will be seen that the metre possesses a rugged strength and dignity which renders it very suitable for epic narration. Since, however, it is alien to modern ears we have thought better, for the present purpose, to replace it by a blank-verse rendering, in which, as far as possible, the alliterative character is preserved.

Poems of a gentler tone are, in Old English Literature, comparatively rare, but examples may be found in the riddles of Cynewulf, some of which (for example the two here quoted) are charming vignettes of nature in her more peaceful aspect. They have an interest not only as exhibiting traces of that lyric feeling which, in our early poetry, is not infrequent, but as showing a delicacy of imagination to which, in the English writings of the time, it is not so easy to find a parallel. For imaginative power and beauty we must, during these centuries, look to the Celtic poetry of Wales and Ireland, of which the latter country in particular was far ahead of English civilization. Specimens of this would have been included in the present volume but for the fact that they have no historical bearing on subsequent events. For many hundred years they remained absolutely neglected by us, and they exercised no influence until the Celtic revival of the nineteenth century¹.

Old English prose began with Alfred², and may

¹ See the chapter on Ireland and Wales in Mr. W. P. Ker's *Dark Ages*, pp. 319-42.

² Even here are predecessors : the Monkish glosses to Latin Texts which were afterwards expanded into the Chronicles.

here be illustrated by a passage from the *Voyage of Wulfstan*, which he added to his translation of Orosius. It is as simple as a child's story: half the sentences begin with the word 'then'; the writer puts down his facts as they occur, with little care of composition or arrangement. But, like many early historians, he has the great merit of clearness; the style is neither jerky and disconnected like that of the Chronicles, nor awkward and involved like that of Bishop Wulfstan; we can draw a map of the country from his description, we grow acquainted with the inhabitants from his narrative. His work is a worthy pendant to the epic force and directness of *Beowulf*, and with it our illustration of English literature during the Heptarchy may fitly conclude.

BEOWULF

Hrothgar, king of the Danes (or Scyldings) builds the greatest and most beautiful of mead-halls, adorned with gold and branching antlers. Here he feasts with his earls; and when evening comes the heroes sleep on the ale-benches. One night a monster called Grendel, comes from his lair, and entering the hall (Heorot), slays thirty of Hrothgar's thanes as they sleep. The next night, he returns again and works fresh havoc; and this continues until no man dare sleep in the hall.

News of the disaster comes across the sea to the warlike tribe of the Geats (or Weders). Beowulf, the greatest of their earls, hears the report, and asks leave of the Geat king, Hygelac, to take with him a company of brave men and set out in quest of Grendel. A boat is soon built, and the heroes sail over the ice-cold sea, until they reach the isles of Denmark.

Lines 210-370.

ON slipped the hours, the ship lay on the sea,
Beneath the shelter of the hanging cliff.
Ready upon the stem the sailors stood,
While tide-drifts drove the waters to the sand.
Then warriors bore unto the bark's wide breast

The wondrous gear, the glorious garb of war ;
And cheerily upon the chosen way
The willing men launched forth the wooden ship.
Wafted o'er tossing waters by the wind,
The boat flew foamy-throated, as a bird
Flies gleaming, and the curved prow cleft the waves,
Until at dawn they saw the pleasant land .
Ashine with sea-cliffs and with towering peaks
And promontories, for the waves were passed,
And at their edge were all the wanderings o'er.
The Weder-folk made fast the floating ship,
Thence climbed up quickly in the clanking mail,
The ringing war-dress, till they reached the plain.
So gave they thanks to God who granted them
An easy way across the ocean waves.
Then he, whose care it was to keep the cliffs,
As warden of the Scyldings, from the wall
Beheld them bear across the gangway bright
Round targes and the ready war array.
Then wonder in his thoughts a tumult worked,
These warriors, who were they ? And so he went
Riding astride his steed toward the strand.
Then Hrothgar's servant sought the parley-word,
Raising his spear-shaft powerfully the while
Within his hands. ' Ho warriors, who are ye
Who come thus corselet-clad across the main,
And hither guide the high and ring-stemmed ship
Over the water-ways ? Warden was I,
And held my watch along the water's edge
That on the land of Danes no loathed foe
Might work us harm with hostile ships of war.
Never more boldly did shield-bearers come,
Yet knew ye not our warriors' pass-word, nor
Our kin's consent. Ne'er saw I mightier lord

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Than one that stands among your company: 40
No mere retainer he, enriched with arms,
If I may read his face and peerless form.
Now must I needs your ancient lineage know
Before you further fare, false traitor spies
On Danish land. Ye dwellers on far shores,
Ye ocean-wanderers, hear my open thought ;
I deem it best that ye without delay
Make clear to me whence all your comings are.'
Then answered him the eldest, opened he,
Guide of the troop, the treasure of his words. 50
'We come from country of the Geat kin,
And hearth-companions are to Hygelac ;
My father was of fame among our folk,
A noble chief, his name was Ecgtheow :
He lingered for long winters ere he left
The dwelling-places, now grown old in days.
Wide through the Witan lives his fair renown.
With hearts of good intent we hither came
To seek thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
The guardian of his people ; grant us then 60
Thy favour, for we bring the famous lord
Of Danish men a mighty message here,
And nought shall be kept secret that I know :
For thou canst tell if what we heard was true,
That 'midst the Scylding folk some foe unknown,
Some hidden doer of the deeds of hate,
Hath wrought in the dark nights, by nameless fear
And dangerous intent, defeat and death.
Wherefore large-hearted counsel do I bring
Of help to Hrothgar, how he, wise and good, 70
May overcome the foe, if e'er for him
Shall remedy return, the ravages
Of sorrow cease, and surging care be stilled :

Else must he ever afterwards endure
Oppression, time of stress, while in its place
His high hall standeth fast.' There on his horse
Firm-seated the undaunted Warder spake :—
'The sharp shield-warrior must discernment show
'Twixt words and works, each wight that judgeth well.
I trow this is a friendly company 80
Unto the prince of Scylding people. Come,
And with you bear your arms and war array,
Myself will guide you, and will give command
That all my thanes shall guard your caulkèd craft
In honour against every enemy,
Upon the shelving beach, until it bears,
Curve-prowed and wooden, back to Weder-mark,
The well-belovèd o'er the water streams.
To him desiring honour 'tis ordained
That he endure unharmed the dint of war.' 90
So went they forth to go ; still lay the ship,
Made fast with ropes, and rested wide of deck
At anchor. Shone the image of the boar
Above the cheek-guards, chased all with gold
Bright from the fire-forgè, guarding them from ill.
Eager of heart they turned and hastened forth,
Together passed they downwards, till they saw
The stately hall high-built and golden-hued.
'Mongst men of earth it was the most renowned
Of halls beneath the heavens ; herein there dwelt 100
The leader ; and its light o'er many a land
Was bright. Forthwith the brave in battle then
Showed them the shining palace of the prince,
To which they sought ; so turned his horse aside,
Called back, and quoth, 'The time has come when I
Must part from you : Father all-powerful
Guard you in all your goings with his grace

In safety ; I must to the sea to keep
 My watch against the hostile troops of war.
 Stone-paved was the street which led their steps. 110
 Then shone the shirts of war ; the shimmering rings,
 Close-linked by hand, hummed in the battle-gear
 When first they hall-wards fared, arrayed for war.
 Set they then down, sea-weary, the wide shields,
 The hard-wrought bucklers, by the palace wall.
 Then sank they to the seats, the corselets sang
 With sounding metal, and the spears were piled,
 Ash-wood, with steel grey-pointed : such the arms
 Of the sea-wanderers ; well with weapons thus
 Their warriors' worth they proved. Then, in his pride, 120
 A hero asked them of their ancestry :
 ' Whence bear you hither shields of plated gold,
 Grey war-shirts, and this show of battle-shafts,
 These vizored helmets ? Hrothgar's herald I
 And messenger. So many alien men
 I ne'er beheld more noble ; not at all
 For exile, as I deem, but excellence,
 For daring and for doughtiness of heart,
 Ye sought for Hrothgar.' Hard beneath his helm
 The Weder prince, in deed of war renowned, 130
 Made proud reply and spake with answering words :
 ' Beowulf my name, and board-companions we
 To Hygelac ; to the son of Healfdene,
 Thy lord and glorious leader, I will bring
 Mine errand, unto him alone, if he
 Will grant us greeting of his graciousness.'
 Then Wulfgar spoke, a Wendel leader he,
 Wide-famed in war and counsel, ' I will ask
 The friend of Danish folk, the famous prince
 The Scylding lord, the scatterer of rings 140
 Of thy design, as thou desirest it,

And fealty will I render the reply
Which my good lord thinks well to give to me.'
Thereafter he returned where Hrothgar sat,
Ancient and hoar, amid his troop of earls.
On stepped the stout of heart, until he stood
Aslant the shoulder¹ of the Danish prince ;
The wonted ways of warriors knew he well.
So gave he greeting to his gracious lord :
' Hither have wended, wandering from far
Over the ways of ocean, Geat folk ;
The battle-warriors name him Beowulf
Who is their leader, and, my lord, they ask
For interchange of speech : most joyous king,
Deny them not that thou shouldst answer them :
Worthy they seem, within their warrior-weeds,
Of welcome from our earls, especially
Their leader is of might who led the men,
The warriors hitherwards.'

150

Hrothgar and his earls receive them gladly ; only the royal herald, Unferth, son of Ecglaef, is jealous and mocks at Beowulf as an idle boaster. After a great feast, the Geats lie down in the hall, and soon they are all sleeping. Then Grendel steals across the misty moor and enters Heorot. He seizes a sleeping warrior, and quickly tears him limb from limb and devours him. Emboldened by success, he next grasps Beowulf himself. A furious struggle ensues ; benches are torn from the floor ; the hall rocks. At last Grendel escapes, sorely wounded. Hrothgar is overjoyed, and richly rewards Beowulf and his comrades. But the evil is not yet at an end. Grendel's mother, who is even fiercer and more terrible than he, comes to avenge her son, and carries off Æschere, Hrothgar's favourite thane. When the heroes learn what has happened, they set out, with Beowulf at their head, to find the lair of the monsters.

¹ It was against etiquette for a subject to stand full in face of his prince.

Lines 1403-1470.

Far on the forest paths the footprints lay, 160
The tracks traced o'er the ground. She, turning back
Over the murky moor, bore the most brave
Of thanes, who watched with Hrothgar o'er the home,
Lifeless away. Then went the child of earls
O'er stony steeps, strait ways and single tracks,
By unproved paths, headlands precipitous,
Through many a cave of monsters of the sea.
Forthright he fared with but a few wise men
To seek the place, when suddenly he saw
The hill-trees overhang the hoary stone; 170
The joyless woods; beneath, the waters lay
Blood-red and restless. Then to all the Danes,
Or thane or earl, the friends of Scylding-folk,
Was sore heart-sorrow, when they found the head
Of Æschere upon the ocean cliff.
The waters seethed with blood and boiling gore,
The warriors gazed thereon, the horn gave forth
An eager war-song ever and anon.
The heroes sat them by the bank, and saw
Monsters mysterious within the mere, 180
Dragons, and Nixies, and great water-snakes:
Along the headland slope the sea-beasts lay,
Which made at morning time a gloomy path
Across the sail-track, beasts and serpent kin;
They rushed away in rage and vengeful wrath,
Scared by the screaming trumpet-voice of war.
Lo, one the Geat lord, with winged bow,
Loosed forth from life and wrestling with the waves;
The hard war-weapon struck him to the heart;
Slowlier he swam till death o'ercame his might, 190
Then through the waves, with spears and barbed hooks.
They shorewards drew the weird sea-wanderer.

Long gazed the men upon the grisly foe.
Then Beowulf girt him in full goodly garb,
The wide war-corselet woven with the hand,
Deftly adorned, must plunge into the mere ;
Nought cared he for his life, yet could it hold
Unscathed his body in the battle-grip.
His head, which now must dive within the depths,
And seek the strife of seas, the shining helm 200
Guarded, gold-dight and girt with lordly chains,
Wondrously worked, as weapon-smiths had wrought
In bygone days, beset with forms of boars,
That brand nor battle-bill might bite it since.
Not meanest of the mighty aids in need
Lent Hrothgar's herald-thane, the hilted sword
Hrunting, of ancient treasures most renowned.
The blade was iron, hard with battle blood,
Dyed with death-dealing drops ; in days of strife
Ne'er had it failed the hands that flashed it forth, 210
In feats of enterprise : not the first time
Was this that it should do most doughty deeds.
Surely the son of Ecglaaf, skilled in strength,
Forgot the word, foul-spoken in the feast,
Which he had uttered, when anon he lent
His weapon to a swordsman worthier.
He feared the famous war-feat to perform,
Or risk his life beneath the war of waves :
He missed the merit of that deed of might.

[Beowulf dives into the mere.]

Lines 1494-1590.

The surge seized on the warrior, a day's space 220
It was ere he might see the solid floor.
Forthwith found she who for full fifty years
Had guarded grim and greedy, fiercely fain,

The water's range, that one of human race
Braved the abode of monsters from above.
Then clutched she at the warrior, clasped with claws
All fearful ; yet she might not harm forthwith
His unscathed form, his sark encircled him,
So could she not cut through his coat of mail,
His woven war-shirt, with her hated hands. 230
Swift to the bottom sank the water-wolf,
Plumbing the depths, and carried to her cave
The mailed warrior : brave then though he were,
He might not wield his weapons ; wondrous forms
Flocked on him as he floated ; the sea-beasts
Dinted his war-shirt with their battling tusks,
And fierce pursued him. Then the prince perceived
That he was in some foeman's hall unharmed,
Nor might the swift embracing of the sea
Surround nor hurt him for the high-roofed hall. 240
A fiery flame he saw, a flicker clear,
A lurid light ; at last the lord beheld
Among the depths the monstrous water-wolf.
He struck a stout stroke with his sword of strife,
His hand withheld not blows, above her head
The ringed sword sang an eager song of war.
When lo ! he found the flashing war-flame fail
Against her life, nor serve him in his need.
Of old full many a close-contended fight
It had survived, and shorn asunder helm 250
And war-dress of the doomed ; the dear-prized sword
Failed for the first time of its former fame.
Then quick of courage was the kinsman bold
Of Hygelac : he thought of highest deeds,
And, filled with wrath, he fiercely flung aside
The jewelled sword, all fair-beset with gems,
So that it lay along upon the earth,

Stiff and steel-edged. He trusted in his strength,
His grip of hand : as every man should trust
Who looks to win a lasting praise in war 260
And recks not of his life. So thus the lord
Of War-Geats gripped Grendel's mother fast
Upon the shoulder, shrinking not from fight.
Then stern in strife as he was stirred with-rage,
He leaped upon the deadly foe, and she
Fell to the floor. A fleet requital then
She gave him with her hands, with graspings grim ;
Till, overborne, the mightiest warrior
Of fighters upon foot stumbled and fell,
So that he sank to earth. She flung herself 270
Down on the hall-guest, drew her dagger forth,
Broad in the blade, with edges gleaming bright¹ :
She would avenge her son, her only child.
The braided breast-net from his shoulder hung :
It saved his life, withstood the stab of steel
By edge or point, for he had perished then,
The child of Ecgtheow, champion of the Geats,
'Neath the wide waters, if his weeds of war,
His harness hard, had helped him not in need ;
Had not the Holy God, wise-hearted Lord, 280
Granted his arm good hap ; when once again
He rose, Heaven's ruler gave him strength aright.
Thereat he saw a sword of old renown,
A sword of giants on the armour-pile,
Peerless of edge, a prize of warriors,
The best of blades ; but at the battle play
Too mighty was it for a man to wield.

¹ The word 'brun' used here is commonly translated 'brown', but in Middle English it often means bright, and in *Sir Gawain* it is used of diamonds. Similar ambiguities exist in Latin and Greek.

The champion of the Scyldings, fierce and grim,
Savage of heart, seized on the belted hilt;
Hopeless of life, he raised the mighty sword, 230
Furiously he struck, and the stern blade
Bit at her neck, and broke the ringèd bones
And cleft her body, that she fell to earth.
Blood dripped upon the blade: the man was blithe
Glad of his work. Behold, a gleam burnt forth,
Light showed within; like as there shineth out,
Clear from the clouds, the candle of the sky.
Then wrathfully the thane of Higelac
Sought through the hall, grasping the weapon's hilt,
Nor did its keen edge play the warrior false. 300
Swiftly he strove the slaughters to requite
Which on the West Danes Grendel erst had wrought,
When Hrothgar's hearth-companions he had slain
Slumbering, and a score of slumbering Danes
He had devoured, and others homeward borne,
A fearful prey. Forthwith the champion fierce
Rendered him his reward, till rested there
Grendel death-weary on the bed of war,
Harmed by the hurt of Heorot: and his corse
Head-severed fell in ruin. 310

After slaying the two monsters, Beowulf returns to his own land, where in course of time he is chosen king. He rules wisely and peacefully for fifty years¹. Then comes the news that part of his kingdom is being laid waste by a fierce Fire-Dragon. The monster has taken possession of a wonderful treasure-hoard which has been buried many years before, and of which no living man knows the place. A thrall, fleeing from

¹ ['Half a hundred'], probably not used to designate a precise number. Many critics think that the story of the Fire-Drake is one of the instances in which Beowulf, the hero, is confused with Beowa, the sun-god, and that it is a version of the common myth which shows how the sun-god is conquered for half the year.

his lord, has chanced to find it, and has carried off some of the gold as a means of making his peace. The dragon's fury is roused when he finds that he has been robbed, and night after night he flies over the country burning crops and destroying houses.

When the old king hears of this he girds on his armour, and with twelve comrades he goes to his last fight for his people. He knows that he must fall in this battle, and he bids them all farewell, ordering them to stand by and watch the issue. Then he goes alone to the mouth of the cave, and utters his war-cry. Hardly has his shout died away before hot smoke pours forth from the opening and the dragon rushes out of his hiding-place. Beowulf fights bravely, but no man can stand against the heat of the dragon's breath. His comrades, terrified at the sight, crouch down in the wood; one alone, Wiglaf, son of Weohstan, comes to help his lord in the fray. He forces his way through the deadly vapour, and inspires Beowulf to make a fresh attack. But the king's sword breaks in his hand, and the dragon seizes him with his poisonous teeth. At this, Wiglaf smites so fiercely that the monster gives way, and Beowulf with one last effort helps to kill the huge snake. His wound, however, is mortal, and he props himself against the earthwork which surrounds the cave, bidding Wiglaf bring out the treasure, that he may see it before he dies.

Lines 2716-2750.

Then went the prince wise-hearted by the wall:
He sat him on the seat, and saw the work
Of giants, how the staple-strengthened stones,
The arches, held the hall upon its place.
The gentle thane refreshed his lord and friend
With water from his hands: unhasped his helm.
Then Beowulf spake, his space of days was spent,
His joy of life was o'er; so of his wounds
Death-pitiful he told; for well he knew
The number of his days, that all was past.
'I fain would leave my armour to my heir,
If so that any son had been vouchsafed

Of my begetting. Governed I in sooth
 This folk full fifty winters, and there dared
 No nation's lord of neighbouring lands bring low
 My strength with fear, nor match with me in strife.
 I tarried in the land the destined time,
 I kept mine own, nor sought for others' gear,
 I swore not evil oaths, so in all this,
 Sick unto death, and wearied sore with wounds, 330
 I yet may have and hold my happiness.
 Because earth's ruler can reproach me not
 With death of kinsmen, when my life departs
 Forth from my frame. Go hither quickly now
 And bring me here the gold by the grey rock,
 Wiglaf beloved, now that lifeless lies
 The snake, sore-wounded, slumbering alone,
 Plundered of his possessions. Haste, I pray,
 That I may see full well the former wealth,
 The golden gifts, the glorious glowing gems 340
 Wrought cunningly: that for this rich array
 Less loath at heart I may at last lay down
 The life and lordship that I held for long.'

Wiglaf brings forth some of the treasure, and when he sees
 it, Beowulf speaks:

Lines 2795-2821.

'Leader of all, and everlasting lord,
 Glory of kings, I give thee thanks with words
 That I have gained this gold I gaze upon,
 Ere death befell me, for my followers.
 Now that I have laid down my long-spent life
 To pay this treasure-hoard, my people's need
 Fulfil thou still: no longer may I stay. 350
 Then bid the bold in war to build a pyre,
 A flaming funeral fire beside the sea;

On Hron's-ness headland shall it tower high,
A memory to my men, that, when o'er mists
Of distant seas the lofty ships shall drive,
It shall be hight of sailors Beowulf's hill.'
The lord, brave-minded, loosed the golden links
From off his throat; he gave them to his thane,
The young war-warrior, bade him use them well,
His mail and necklet, and his gold-wrought helm. 360
'Thou art the only remnant of our race,
Of Wægmund folk, for Fate has hastened forth,
Carrying my kinsmen, the courageous earls,
To endless life, and I must after them.'
Lo, 'twas the last word of the aged lord
That left his breast, for ere the fire of bale,
The hot flame-surge, he swiftly sought, his soul
Fared forth from out his breast to find the doom
Of faithful service.

Wiglaf commands that the treasure be brought from the dragon's hall, and that the bale-fire be built on Hron's-ness for the burial of the king.

Lines 3058-3135.

Then Wiglaf spoke, the son of Weohstan: 370
'Full often by the cause of one alone
Must many suffer misery, as now
Cometh to us. Nought could we counsel him,
Our loved lord and guardian of the land,
In any wise, that he would not make war,
Greeting in strife the guardian of the gold;
But let him lie there where he long had been,
And keep his dwelling till the world's last end.
On high is destiny ordained. In sight
Now lies the gold that was so grimly won, 380
Too fierce a fate has forced the folk-king here.

I was within, and saw it every whit,
 The riches of the hall, when room was given,
 Yet not ungrudging, and my journey made
 Under the earth-wall. Eagerly I seized
 A full huge heap of treasure in my hands;
 Hither I bore the mighty burden out
 Unto my king : his life was still in him,
 And wise his wit. Much said he, sorrowing,
 The aged king, and bade me greet you all ; 330
 That you should build upon the place of bale,
 Fitting the deed of him your friend, a hill
 Mighty and high as he was among men,
 The worthiest warrior of the wide earth,
 While he the kingly jewels might enjoy.
 Now fare we fleetly on a further track,
 To seek and see the heaps of wondrous wealth,
 The marvel 'neath the wall. I show the way
 That ye may see the rings and the broad gold
 Close by : then let the bier with haste be built 400
 When we come forth, and let us carry then
 Our lord beloved where he shall long abide
 In the All-ruler's care.' Commanded then
 The son of Weohstan the warriors
 Boldest in battle they should bid forthwith
 All heroes holding lands or ruling men
 To fetch from far the funeral fire-wood
 Whither the lord lay dead. 'The flames shall leap,
 The wan fire wax around the warrior chief,
 Who oft amid the shower of steel, endured 410
 The storm of arrows starting from the strings,
 Across the shield-wall when the feathered shaft
 Carried the barb.' So Weohstan's wise son
 Summoned there seven servants of the king,
 The noblest thanes ; then 'neath the ill-starred roof

They entered in : and he that led the way
Bore in uplifted hand a burning torch.
'Twas not ordained by lot who should despoil
The hoard ; when men beheld it in the hall
Rusting, unguarded of its ancient ward, 420
Little cared any that they carried thence
The precious gear in haste. They dragged the snake,
The monstrous serpent, over the sea-cliff,
Let the waves grip the guardian of the gold,
The flood enfold him fast. Then on the wain
The linked gold was loaded, beyond tale
Or number countless : so the prince was borne,
The hoary warrior, to Hronnes-ness.
Then on the ground the Geat-folk prepared
In honour of their king a funeral pyre, 430
Hung round with hauberks, shields, and shining helms,
As he had bidden. On the topmost pile
The heroes mourning laid their lord to sleep,
And lit the bale-fire round about his corse.
Black-wreathing rose the smoke above the wood,
Fierce roared the flames, while all the wind was still,
And lapped his breast in fire : with sorrowing heart,
Weeping around they made lament for him.

.
Then o'er his ashes piled they high a mound ;
Ten days they wrought, till it rose tall and broad, 440
A beacon to the sea-men from afar ;
And in it laid they jewels rich, and rings,
The treasures taken from the dragon's hoard,
Which yet remain there mingled with the dust,
Unused of men, as in the former time.
This done, twelve sons of princes mounted horse
And rode around the barrow. As they rode
They chanted loud the praises of their chief,

Yet oft their voices brake in grief, whene'er
 They thought upon his deeds of enterprise. 450
 Meet is it that a man should tell the tale
 Of noble acts ; meet that his heart should burn
 With love towards his liege lord, when at last
 The spirit must go forth upon its way,
 And the loved leader come again no more.
 Thus Beowulf's comrades mourned him when he fell,
 And thus they sang his praise : ' Kindest wert thou
 Of all kings of the earth, gentle and strong,
 To all men gracious, and in clash of war
 Most eager thou for glory.' 460

CYNEWULF'S RIDDLES

The two following riddles are taken from the collection of Old English poems known as the Exeter Book, which was presented to his Cathedral Library by Leofric, Bishop of Exeter, about the middle of the eleventh century. They are probably by the Cynewulf who was Bishop of Lindisfarne, and who died in 780. The answer to the first is 'a swan'; and to the second 'gnats'.

RIDDLE I

My robes rest silent when I roam the earth,
 Still, when I stay at home, or stir the waves ;
 Anon my pinions poise me up above
 The high air o'er the homes of warriors.
 Far o'er the folk the cloud-force floateth me,
 Mightily whirr my wings, make melody,
 Sing wondrously, when I, a wanderer,
 Touch neither world nor wave.

RIDDLE VII

Lo, the wind wafts aloft these little wights
 Over the mountain brows ; full black are they,
 Swart, sable-clad, yet softly voiced in song.

They wander forth in clouds, and clearly wail,
 Float o'er the forest heights, or fly above
 The city dwellings of the sons of men.
 Behold, they name themselves!

ALFRED (849-901), son of Athelwulf, was born at Wantage in 849, and succeeded his brother Athelred I as King of Wessex in 871. In 877 he defeated the Danes at Exeter, and in 878, after inflicting on them another defeat at Edington, he concluded with Guthrum a ten years' peace at Wedmore in Somerset. This period he occupied partly in consolidating the laws of his kingdom, partly in encouraging education, and particularly in promoting the use and study of the English language. To further this end he ordered that the songs of the people should be taught in his palace school, and himself made translations of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, of Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy*, of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, and of the *Universal History* of Orosius, to which he added an account of the recent explorations of Ohthere and Wulfstan in Northern Europe. Between 893 and 897 he again conducted a series of victorious campaigns against the Danish invaders, whom he drove successively from Kent, Mercia, and Essex. He died in 901, a little over fifty years of age.

VOYAGE OF WULFSTAN

(From Alfred's translation of Orosius)

Note.—The countries here mentioned lie along the shores of the Baltic, especially the southern part of Sweden and the coast between Dantzic and Königsberg. Hæthum is Slesvig, Weonothland (Wendland) is roughly the country now covered by Pomerania; Langaland, Læland, Falster, and Sconeg still retain their old names; Burgendaland is the island of Bornholm; Bleding-eg, Meore, Eowland and Gotland can all be recognized on or near the Swedish coast. The river Wisle is the Vistula, Ilfing is its tributary the Elbling; and the Est-sea (Estmere) means the land-locked lagoon within the Gulf of Dantzic, which is now known as the Frischer Haff. The Est-men (Estas) are the Esthonians, and Witland, their territory, extends from about Königsberg to about Riga.

WULFSTAN said that he set out from Hæthum, and that in seven days and nights he came to Truso, and that the

whole way the ship was going under sail. Weonothland lay on the starboard, and on the larboard lay Langaland and Læland and Falster and Sconeg, and all this land belongeth to the Danes. Thereafter Burgendaland was on our larboard, and this hath its own king. And then after Burgendaland the lands that are called Blecinga-eg and Meore and Eowland and Gotland were on our larboard, and this country belongeth to the Swedes. And Weonothland lay on our starboard all the way unto the mouth of the Wisle. The Wisle is a very great water, and it divideth Witland from Weonothland: and this Witland belongeth to the Est-men: and the Wisle floweth forth from Weonothland and runneth into the Est-sea, and the Est-sea is about fifteen miles broad. Then cometh the Ilfling from the east, to the Est-sea, of that sea on the shore whereof standeth Truso: and there meet together at the Est-sea Ilfling from the east out of Estland, and Wisle from the south out of Winodland. And then the Wisle taketh the name away from the Ilfling, and floweth from the Est-sea west and north into the sea; wherefore they call it the mouth of the Wisle.

The Estland is very great, and there are many cities, and in each city is a king. And there is much honey and fishing; and the king and the richest men drink mare's milk, and the poor men and the thralls drink mead. There is exceeding much strife between them. And there is no ale brewed among the Est-men, but there is mead enough. And there is among the Est-men a custom, when a man is dead, that he lieth unburned in the house among his kinsmen and friends, sometimes for one month, sometimes for two months; and the kings and other men of high rank so much longer as they have more wealth: sometimes for half a year they are unburned and lie above the earth in their houses. And all the

time that the body is within, there shall be feasting and revelry until the day that they burn it. Then on that same day, when they will bear him to the pyre, they divide out those of his goods that are left after the feasting and playing, into five or six shares : sometimes into more according to the tale of his wealth. They lay the largest share about a mile from the city ; then the second, then the third, until it is all laid within the one mile ; and the smallest share shall be nearest to the town where the dead man lieth. Then all the men who have the swiftest horses in the land shall be gathered together about five or six miles from the shares. Then they all gallop towards the shares ; then cometh the man who hath the swiftest horse unto the first and greatest share, and so one after another until it is all taken ; and he who rideth nearest to the town taketh the smallest share of that wealth. And then each man rideth his way with the goods ; and they may have all : and therefore the swiftest horses are very precious. And when his wealth is all spent in this manner they bear the dead man out and burn him with his weapons and his armour ; and the greatest part of his treasure they spend during the long lying of the dead man within ; and that which they lay by the wayside, strangers gallop to it and take it. And there is among the Est-men a custom that every man of their people shall be burned, and if they find there one bone unburned, it shall be atoned at a great price. And there is among the Est-men one tribe that can work with cold ; and there the dead men lie very long and do not decay, for they work on them with cold. And there they set two vessels full of ale or water, and they can cause either of them to be frozen over, whether it be summer or winter.

CHAPTER II

FRENCH INFLUENCE: LYRIC

It has been observed that Old English poetry, which contributes virtually nothing to the lyric form, nevertheless contains some definite indications of the lyric spirit. The poems of the *Wanderer* and the *Seafarer*, of the *Wife's Complaint* and the *Husband's Message*, strike a clear personal note, and even their descriptions of nature have a more intimate reference to human feeling and experience than is to be found in the northern literature with which they were contemporary. No doubt too much can be made of this: the feeling is only half conscious, only half lyric, but it indicates a racial character to which song was congenial and which the forms of song could most readily focus and intensify. If to this be added the love of music, for which England throughout her earlier history was renowned, it can easily be seen that all the conditions were present for the growth and encouragement of a lyric art. The temper was there: it only needed impetus and direction.

The accession of French influence which followed upon the Norman conquest supplied this need. France during the twelfth century was vocal from end to end with Troubadours and Trouvères; devisers of singing melody, and of dainty and delicate stanza, artificers of harmonious rhymes, and of graceful versification. Through all their work there is a spirit of courtliness and refinement which laid a civilizing touch on our native simplicity; many of them, like Guillaume of Poitiers, Geoffroy Rudel,

Thibault of Navarre, were of gentle or royal birth: those who sprang from the people learned in the same school and pursued the same ideals. The close interrelation between England and France enabled them to affect and influence our countrymen; one of the most famous—Regnault de Coucy—followed Richard I to the Crusades; others found as ready a welcome in the English court as in Anjou or Aquitaine¹. From this union sprang the childhood of English lyric poetry: a childhood in which the characteristics of both parents were reproduced. Our verse was content to follow the French models; in our music we far surpassed them.

It is probable that the beginnings of our lyric movement may be dated considerably earlier than any specimen which we actually possess. Walter Map, who was born about 1143, speaks of the Canon and the Round in terms which imply that they were familiar to his readers; and the same manuscript in which these allusions are preserved contains an example of a Rota or Round so masterly in construction that we must needs regard it as the inheritor of a long tradition of skill. This is the famous song, 'Sumer is i-cumen in', the music of which, attributed on imperfect evidence to John of Fornsete, is dated by Mr. Wooldridge at 1240². It is composed for four equal voices, which sing in canon through the first ten lines of the poem, and two basses, which maintain throughout a continuous burden to the words 'Sing cuccu, nu, sing cuccu'. In the history of music it is at present unique; through the whole of Europe there is no composition of the time which is comparable with it; and though nearly seven centuries have elapsed, its

¹ The *Lais de Marie de France* (c. 1170) were written in England.

² i.e. that is the date of the copy which we possess. See Mr. Wooldridge's account of this work, *Old English Popular Music*, vol. i. pp. 9-15; *Oxford History of Music*, vol. i. pp. 326-88.

freshness and beauty have not yet lost their charm. The poem, written in the Wessex dialect (Berkshire or Wiltshire), is as light and spontaneous as the melody to which it is set: a song of pure joy which, like Sidney's shepherd, 'pipes as though it should never grow old'. Among other lyrics of the same period, though of a somewhat later date, may be mentioned *Alisoun*; *Blou, northern Wynd*; *Wynter wakeneth al my care*; the exquisite *Hymn to the Virgin* (all c. 1300, all quoted in the Oxford Book of English Verse); and especially the spring-song, *Lenten ys come with Love to Tounne*, which begins with the sheer delight of bird and blossom, and ends with a true lyric touch on the personal note.

One further point may be observed. In Old English poetry the tone, with hardly an exception, is always tragic. The *Seafarer* dwells upon the sterner aspects of storm and tempest; the *Wanderer* goes 'winter-wretched over woven waves of sea'; the cuckoo that, in the *Husband's Message*, 'by copse-side chants his sorrow', is far different from the merry bird which, in our earliest lyric, heralds the return of summer. In the poems of the thirteenth century there is a wider gamut of emotion, and, above all, there is room for that feeling of joyousness which made the Troubadours say that they professed 'the gay science'. In all likelihood this is due to a change of conditions, to a higher civilization, to a fuller sense of ease and security in life. Nature to our first English ancestors was an enemy to be overcome, as the sea is to many sea-faring folk nowadays; and in the change of standpoint, as well as in the more polished phrases, we may observe the effect of a chivalrous and courtly art.

About the middle of the fourteenth century Scotland entered the field with John Barbour's Epic on the Bruce. In this there are evident traces

of the new feeling: it is an epic touched with lyric influences, and revealing the personality of the poet in a manner impossible to the singers of ballad and saga. The lines on Freedom here quoted are the direct utterance of the writer himself; not an 'imitation', as Plato would call it, of the sentiments which he attributes to the characters of his poem. It is therefore interesting to note that, according to historical evidence, Barbour received the main part of his education in England, and that it was in her music that his early genius was trained.

By way of contrast are appended a few stanzas from the *Proverbs of Hendyng*, examples of that shrewd and homely wisdom which grows of itself in the soil of national life. They belong to the reign of Edward I, but cannot be more accurately dated.

It is, then, in lyric feeling and in lyric forms that the English poetry of this period reaches its highest development. Besides this, however, there was during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries much literary activity, which may briefly be catalogued under the following heads:—(a) the prose Homilies; (b) the *Ormulum* (c. 1200), a series of homilies in verse; (c) the versified chronicles, e.g. *Brut* (c. 1205), and the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester (1298); (d) religious poems, such as the *Orison of Our Lady* (c. 1210), the *Story of Genesis and Exodus* (c. 1250), and the Metrical Psalter (c. 1300); (e) the later sagas, e.g. the final version of *Havelok* and the *Geste of King Horn* (both before 1300); (f) Satires, such as the *Land of Cokayne* (c. 1250). From this list are omitted the theological works (e.g. those of Anselm) and the philosophical works (e.g. those of Roger Bacon), which were written in Latin.

CUCKOO SONG

SUMER is icumen in, Lhude sing cuccu! Groweth sed, and bloweth med, And springth the wude nu— Sing cuccu!	Summer has come in, sing loud, cuckoo! The seed grows, the mead blossoms, and now the wood is springing: sing, cuckoo!
---	---

Awe bleteth after lomb, Lhouth after calve cu; Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth ¹ , Murie sing cuccu!	Theewe bleats after her lamb, the cow lows after her calf; the bullock leaps, the buck couches; sing merrily, cuckoo!
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Cuccu, cuccu, well singes thu, cuccu: 10 Ne swike thu naver nu. Sing cuccu, nu, sing cuccu!	Cuckoo, cuckoo, thou singest well, cuckoo: cease thou never now. Sing cuckoo, now, sing cuckoo.
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SPRING SONG

c. 1300.

LENTEN ² ys come with love to tounne, With blosmen ant with briddes roune ³ ,	Spring has come with love to town, with blossoms and the twit- tering of birds, that
--	---

¹ To 'vert' (used specially of deer) means to couch or harbour in the fern. 'Vert' in forest law means 'everything that grows and bears a green leaf, within the forest, which may cover or hide a deer'.

² 'Lent' properly means 'spring': Old English *Lencten*. 'To tounne', in the same line, is interpreted by Morris and Skeat as 'in its turn'; but the rendering given above seems preferable.

³ 'Roune', literally 'whispering' (so in l. 29 of this poem); here apparently the sound represented by the French *gazouillement*.

That al this blisse bryngeth¹; bring all these joys;
 Dayes-eyes in this dayles, daisies in the valleys,
 Notes suete of nyhtegales, sweet notes of nightin-
 Vch foul song singeth; gales, each bird sings
 The threstlecoc him threteth oo², its song. The throstle-
 Away is huere wynter wo, cock ever outsings them;
 When woderove springeth; their winter sorrow is
 This foules singeth ferly fele, 10 gone when woodruff
 Ant wlyteth³ on huere wynter grows: the birds sing
 wele, wondrous many, and
 That al the wode ryngeth. pipe over their winter
 joy, so that all the wood
 rings.

The rose rayleth⁴ hire rode, The rose puts on her
 The leues on the lyhte wode crimson, the leaves on
 Waxen al with wille; the tender wood grow all
 The mone mandeth hire bleo⁵, with good will, the moon
 The lilie is lossom to seo, sends forth her white-
 The fenyl ant the fille; ness, the lily is lovely
 Wowes this wilde drakes, to see, the fennel and the
 Miles murgeth huere makes⁶. thyme; the wild drakes
 woo, the beasts make
 merry their mates.

¹ In the southern dialect, at this period, the termination *-eth* was used indifferently for singular and plural. Cf. lines 16 and 20 of this poem.

² 'Him' for 'hem' (them), as 'this' for 'these'. See Morris and Skeat, *ad loc.* 'Threteth', literally 'chide' or 'threaten'; 'oo' is a variant of 'aye'.

³ 'Wlyteth', whistle or pipe; possibly formed from the sound.

⁴ From the Old English *hrægel*, a garment; cf. 'night-rail'.

⁵ 'Bleo', literally colour, or complexion; cf. 'Nicolete so bright of ble', in F. W. Bourdillon's translation of *Aucassin and Nicolete*.

⁶ 'Miles' may be connected with the Welsh *mil* (an animal). There is a variant reading 'males'. 'Murgeth', from the Old English *myrge* = merry. 'Makes', from Old English *maca*: our modern word 'match' is a softened form.

Ase strem that striketh
 stille
 Mody meneth; so doth mo
 (Ichot icham on of tho)
 For love that likes ille.

As a stream that trickles
 slowly the moody man
 laments; so do many
 others (I trow I am of
 them), for love that ill
 pleases.

The mone mandeth hire lyht,
 So doth the semly sonne bryht,
 When briddes singeth breame;
 Deawes donketh¹ the dounes,
 Deores with huere derne rounes²
 Domes forte deme³: 30
 Wormes woweth under cloude,
 Wymmen waxeth wounder
 proude,
 So wel hit wol hem seme;
 Gif me shal wonte wille of on
 This wunne weole⁴ y wole
 forgon
 Ant wyht⁵ in wode be fleme.

The moon sends forth
 her light, so doth the
 bright seemly sun when
 birds sing boldly; dews
 water the downs, lovers
 with their secret whis-
 pers (come) to declare
 their fate. Snakes woo
 beneath the clod, wo-
 men grow wondrous
 proud, so well will it
 seem with them. If I
 shall lack the good will
 of one, I will forgo all
 this wealth of joy and be
 a banished man in the
 forest.

¹ Cf. Milton's 'Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire'.

² 'Deores', our word 'dear'; 'derne', from Old English *dierne* = secret; 'rounes', see note on line 2.

³ Literally 'to pronounce dooms'. The principal verb ('come') has been omitted.

⁴ 'Wunne', genitive singular of 'wun' = joy (Old English *wyn*; German *Wonne*). 'Weole', compare our words 'wealth' and 'weal'.

⁵ 'Wyht' = wight, or man (Old English *wiht*, a creature).

Gef thou havest bred ant ale,
 Ne put thou nout al in thy male,
 Thou del hit sum aboute.
 Be thou fre of thy meeles,
 Wher-so me¹ eny mete deles, 21
 Gest thou nout withoute.
 'Betere is appell ygevet then y-ete,'
 Quoth Hendyng.

If thou hast bread and
 ale put it not all in thy
 sack, do thou give some
 of it round. Be thou
 free of thy meals, and
 wheresoever a man gives
 any meat thou goest not
 without. 'An apple
 given is better than
 an apple eaten,' quoth
 Hendyng.

Drawe thyn hond sone ageyn,
 Gef men the doth a wycke theyn²,
 Ther thyn ahte³ ys lend:
 So that child with-draweth is
 hond
 From the fur ant the brond
 That hath byfore bue brend. 30
 'Brend child fur dredeth,'
 Quoth Hendyng.

Draw back thine hand
 quickly again, if men do
 thee an ill turn to whom
 thy substance was lent.
 So that child with-
 draws his hand from
 the fire and the burning
 that hath been burned
 before. 'A burnt child
 dreads the fire,' quoth
 Hendyng.

Moni mon seith, were he ryche,
 Ne shulde non be me glyche⁴
 To be god ant fre;

Many a man saith, if
 he were rich 'there
 should be none like me
 to be good and free-

¹ 'Me' (from 'men') is an indefinite pronoun, like the French *on*.

² 'Wycke' = wicked. 'Theyn' seems originally to have meant 'service' (cf. German *dienen*). 'Thanes' were the attendants of the king.

³ 'Ahte', or 'aght', means a man's possessions: Old English *agan*, to own.

⁴ 'Glyche' = the Old English *gelic* (like).

For when he hath oht bygeten,
Al the fredome is forgeten

Ant leyd under kne¹.

'He is fre of hors that ner nade
non²,'

Quoth Hendyng. 40

handed.' For when he
hath gained ought all
the freedom is forgotten
and trodden under foot.
'He is free-handed with
his horse that never had
one,' quoth Hendyng.

JOHN BARBOUR (1316 ?-1395), the earliest of Scottish poets, was educated at Oxford and Paris, and in 1357 was made Archdeacon of Aberdeen. His poem *The Bruce* became a national epic, and in 1378 he was rewarded by Robert II with a pension, which was increased ten years later. Beside this work there have been discovered at Cambridge two fragments of a poem on Troy, adapted from Guido da Colonna's *Historia destructionis Troiae*, and a complete poem on the Lives of the Saints, taken in great measure from the *Golden Legend*. The dialect in which he wrote was called by him 'Inglish', a term also used by Scottish poets of a later date.

• TO FREEDOM

A ! Fredome is a noble thing !
Fredome mayse man to haif
liking ;

Fredome all solace to man giffis,
He livis at ese that frely livis !

A noble hart may haif nane ese,
Na ellys nocht³ that may him
plese,

Gif fredome fail'th ; for fre liking
Is yharnit⁴ over all other thing.

Ah ! Freedom is a
noble thing ! Freedom
makes man to have de-
light ; freedom gives to
man all solace ; he lives
at ease that lives in
freedom. A noble heart
can have no ease, nor
ought else that can give
it pleasure, if freedom
fails ; for the delight of
freedom is desired more

¹ Literally, 'laid under the knee'. 'Trodden under foot' would be our modern equivalent.

² Observe the three negatives.

³ Lit. 'nor nought else.' See the same double negative four lines later.

⁴ The same as our word 'yearn'.

Na he that ay has livit fre
 May nocht knaw well the pro-
 pertè, 10
 The anger, na the wretchit doom
 That is couplit¹ to foul thral-
 dome.
 But gif he had assayit it,
 Then all perquer² he suld³ it wit;
 And suld think fredome mar to
 prise
 Than all the gold in warld that is.
 Thus contrar thingis evermar
 Discoweringis of the tothir⁴ are.
 (From *The Bruce*.)

than all things beside.
 Nor can he that has al-
 ways lived free know
 aught well of the char-
 acter, the anger, or the
 wretched fate, that be-
 longs to foul slavery.
 But if he have essayed
 it, then he would know
 it in his very heart, and
 would think freedom
 more to be prized than
 all the gold that is in
 the world. Thus ever-
 more things contrary
 are revealers one of the
 other.

¹ Lit. 'coupled' or 'joined'.

² i. e. *par cœur*.

³ 'Suld' for 'should', and the terminations *-is*, *-it*, for *-es*, *-ed* (e.g. *giffis*, *livis*, *assayit*) are characteristic of the northern dialect.

⁴ The Old English form was 'that other', and the *t* was mis-
 placed by a wrong division of the words. 'Nædre' (adder) and
 'napern' (apron) have lost an initial, and 'nickname' (an eke-name)
 has gained one, by a similar mistake.

CHAPTER III

FRENCH INFLUENCE: ROMANCE, FABLIAU, AND BALLAD

Among the verse forms of Northern France one of the most popular was the Fabliau, a kind of metrical romance, lighter in tone than the epic, humorous or adventurous or satirical as occasion serves, designed for entertainment and satisfied if it achieved its aim. Roughly speaking, it occupied much the same place in the literature of the time as the poems and romances of Scott in the literature of the nineteenth century, covering somewhat the same range of topics, and treating them, though with far less genius, yet with somewhat the same vivacity and good humour. It made no attempt to rival the seriousness of the Chanson de Geste, or the personal feeling of the lyric, or the metrical dexterities of the ballade; but told a simple straightforward story, enlivened with picturesque touches of description and amusing comments on human nature. Such a Yule-tide story, told by the minstrel while the family gathered round the hearth, is the Fabliau of Sir Cleges, which was translated or imitated from the French by some unknown author about the year 1350. Of its hero we know little or nothing. A Sir Cleges is mentioned in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*¹, but the identification is as uncertain as it is unimportant. At any rate the Sir Cleges of the tale was a knight of Uther's court, who by lavish hospitality had brought himself into straitened means, until he had but one manor left and could no longer entertain his friends and dependants. How his wife consoled him; how a miracle was wrought in his

¹ i. 96; iii. 139 and 146.

favour; how he obtained access to the king; how he requited the officers who would have barred his passage; and how he was finally restored to his high estate, is all told in easy flowing verse, which without appearance of artifice or effort keeps the attention alert and carries it without a break to the conclusion.

Far different in spirit, though in form almost equally touched by French influence, are the fighting ballads of Laurence Minot, who followed King Edward to the wars and narrated in stirring verse the capture of Calais, the victory of Neville's Cross, and other triumphs of the greatest Plantagenet reign. His poems are marked by that tone of Chauvinism with which England has often been accredited by continental nations, but they are strong and vigorous, cutting straight to the heart of the matter and wasting no words on episodes or accessories. So little of his writing has been preserved that we may hesitate to assign him a place among the poets who have directed the course of English literature; but it is possible, without extravagance, to trace something of his simplicity and directness in the ballads of the next century, and even to catch some far-off echoes in Drayton's well-known song of Agincourt.

SIR CLEGES

(From Weber's *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*.)

WILL ye lystyn and ye schyll here
Of eldyrs that before us were,
 Bothe hardy and wyght¹:
In the tyme of kynge Uter,
That was fadyr of kynge Arthyr,
 A semely man in sight.

¹ 'Strong', from the Norse *Vigt*. Not connected with the Old English *wiht* (see line 33).

He hade a knyght that hight Sir Cleges,
A dowtyar¹ was non of dedes

Of the round tabull ryght :
He was a man of hight stature, 19
And therto full fayr of feture,
And also of gret myght.

A corteyssear knyght than he was on
In all the lond was there non ;

He was so gentyll and fre ;
To men that traveld in londe of ware²,
And weren fallyn in poverte bare,
He yave both gold and fee :
The pore pepull he wold releve,
And no man wold he greve, 20

Meke of maners was hee :
His mete was fre to every man
That wold com and vesite hym than :
He was full of plente.

The knyght hade a gentyll wyffe,
There might never better bere life,

And mery sche was on sighte.
Dame Clarys hight that fayre lady ;
Sche was full good sekyrly,
And gladsum both day and nyghte : 30
Almes gret sche wold geve
The pore pepull to releve ;

Sche cherissched many a wight.
For them had no man dere³,
Reche ar pore, wethyr they were,
They ded ever ryght.

¹ 'Doughtier'.

² 'Of ware' means costly.

³ 'Hurt'. The line means 'no man was ever injured by them'.

Every yer Sir Cleges wold
 At Cristemas a gret fest-hold,
 In worschepe of that daye ;
 As ryall in all thynges
 40
 As he hade ben a kynge,
 Forsoth as I you saye.
 Rech and pore in the cuntre about
 Schulde be there wythoutten doubt :
 There wold no man say nay.
 Mynstrellis wold not be behynde ;
 For there they myght most myrthis fynd ;
 There wold they be aye.

.
 To hold the feste he wold not lett ;
 His maners he did to wede sett¹,
 50
 He thowght hem out to quyghtt² :
 Thus he festyd many a yere,
 Many a knyght and squire,
 In the name of God almyghtt.
 So at the last, the soth to say,
 All his good was spent awaye,
 Than hade he but lyght³.
 Thowe his good were ner and leste⁴,
 Yet he thowght to make a feste ;
 60
 Yn God he hopyd ryght.

This rialte⁵ he made than aye,
 Tyll his maneres were all awaye,
 Hym was lefte but on ;
 And that was of so lytyll a value
 That he and his wyffe trewe
 Might not leve thereon.

¹ 'Pledged' (i.e. pawned). ² 'Redeem' (cf. our word 'quittance').

³ 'Little' (see 'lyte' in the passage from Occleve, p. 142).

⁴ i.e. 'near hand lost' (near hand = nearly).

⁵ 'Royalty', i.e. royal cheer.

His men that weren mekyll of pride
 Gan slake awaye on every syde ;
 With hym there wold dwell non
 But he and his childyrn too :
 Than was his hart in mech woo,
 And he made mech mone.

70

And yt befell on Crestemas evyn^f
 The kyng bethowght hym full evyn ;
 He dwellyd be Kardyfe¹ syde.

Whan yt drewe toward the noun
 Sir Cleges fell in suounyng sone
 Whan he thowght on that tyde,
 And on his myrthys that he schuld hold,
 And howe he hade his maners sold
 And his renttes wyde.

80

Mech sorowe made he there,
 He wrong his hand, and weped sore,
 And fellyd was his pryde.

.

As he stod in mornyng soo
 His good wyffe cam hym unto,
 And in hyr armys hym hent ;
 Sche kyssyd hym wyth glad chere :
 ' My Lord,' sche seyde, ' my trewe fere²,
 I hard what ye ment³ :

90

Ye see will yt helpyth nowght
 To make sorowe in your hart,
 Therefore I pray you stynte.
 Let your sorowe awaye gon,
 And thanke God of hys lone
 Of all that he hath sent.'

.

¹ Cardiff.² 'Companion'.³ 'Moaned'.

'I asent,' seyð he tho,
 And yn with hyr he gan goo,
 And sumwatt mendyd hys chere ;
 But nevertheles hys hart was sore, 100
 And sche hym comforttyd more and more,
 Hys sorowe away to stere.
 So he began to waxe blyth,
 And whyppyd away hys teris swyth¹
 That ran doun be his lyre².
 Than they wasschyd and went to mete,
 Wyth sech vitell as they myght gett,
 And made mery in fere³.
 Whan they had ete, the soth to saye,
 With myrth they droffe the day awaye 110
 As will as they myght:
 Wyth her chyldyrn play they ded,
 And after soper went to bed,
 Whan yt was tyme of nyght:
 And on the morowe they went to chirch
 Godes service for to werch⁴,
 As yt was reson and ryght.
 Sir Cleges knelyd on his kne ;
 To Jesu Crist prayed he,
 Because of his wyffe. 120
 'Gracius Lord,' he seyð thoo,
 'My wyffe and my chyldyrn too
 Kepe hem out of stryffe !'
 The lady prayed for hym ayen
 That God schuld kepe hym from payne
 In everlastyng lyf.
 Whan service was don hom they went,
 And thanked God with god entent,
 And put away penci⁵.

¹ 'Quickly'.² 'Face', from Old English *Meor*, the cheek.³ 'Together' (see line 89).⁴ 'Perform' (our word 'work').⁵ 'Care' (Fr. *pensée*, 'thought').

Whan he to hys place cam, 130
 His care was well abatyd than,
 Thereof he gan stynt :
 He made his wife afore hym goo,
 And his chyldyrn both to :
 Hymselfe alone went
 Into a gardeyne there besyde,
 And knelyd down in that tyde,
 And prayed God veramend :
 And thanked God with all his hartt
 Of his disese¹ and his povertt, 140
 That to hym was sent.
 As he knelyd on hys knee
 Underneath a chery-tre,
 Makyng his preyere,
 He rawght a bowe on hys hede,
 And rosse upe in that stede ;
 No lenger knelyd he there.
 Whan the bowe was in hys hand
 Grene leues thereon he fonde,
 And round beryse in fere. 150
 He seyde, ' Dere God in Trenytè,
 What manere of beryse may this be
 That grouyn this tyme of yere ? '

 Than seyde the lady with good chere,
 ' Latt us fyll a panyer
 Of this that God hath sent :
 Tomoroun whan the day dothe spryng
 Ye schill to Cardyffe to the kynge,
 And yeve hym to present ;
 And seche a yefte ye may have there 160
 That the better wee may fare all this yere ;
 I tell you verament.'
 ¹ 'Trouble'.

On the moroun, whan yt was lyght,
The lady had a panere dyght,

Hyr eldest son callyd sche,
'Take up thys panyer goodly
And bere yt forth esyly

Wyth thy fadyr fre.'
Than Sir Cleges a staffe toke ;
He had non hors, so seyth the boke,

170

To ryde on hys jorny ;
Neythyr stede ner palfray,
But a staffe was hys hakeney¹,
As a man in povertè.

Sir Cleges and his son gent
The right waye to Cardiffe went
Oppon Cristemas daye.

To the castell he cam full right,
As they were to mete dyght:

Anon, the sothe to say,
In Sir Cleges thowght to goo,
But in pore clothyng was he tho,
And in sympull araye.

180

The porter seyde full hastyly,
'Thou chorle, withdrawe thè smertly,
I rede thè, without delaye.

'Ellys, be heven and Seint Mari,
I schall breke thyne hede on high:

Go stond in beggers rowght!
Yf thou com more inward

190

It schall thè rewe afterward,
So I schall thè clowght.'

'God sir,' seyde Sir Cleges tho,
'I pray thou lat me in goo
Now without dowght:

¹ Our word 'hackney'.

The kyng I have a present browghtt
 From hym that made all thyng of nowght :
 Behold all abowght.'

The porter to the panere went,
 And the led uppe he hentt ; 200

The cheryse he gan behold.
 Well he wyst, for his comyng
 Wyth that present to the kyng,
 Gret yeffes have he schuld.
 'Be hym,' he seyde, 'that me bowght,
 Into thys place comste thou nott,
 As I am man of mold,
 The thyrd part but¹ thou graunte me
 Of that the kyng will yeve the,
 Wethyr yt be sylver or gold.' 210

Sir Cleges seyde, 'I asent ;'
 He yave hym leve, and in he went
 Without more lettyng.
 In he went a gret pace :
 The usscher at the hall dore was
 Wyth a staffe stondynge,
 In poynte Cleges for to smyght.
 'Goo bake, thou chorle,' he seyde, 'full tyghte²
 Without teryng ;
 I schall the bette every leth³, 220
 Hede and body, wythout greth⁴,
 Yf thou make more pressynge.'

'Good sir,' seyde Sir Cleges than,
 'For hys love that made man
 Sese your angrye mode !

¹ 'Unless', or 'except'.

² 'Quickly'.

³ 'Limb'.

⁴ 'Security' (Old English *grith*, the king's peace).

I have herr a present browght
From hym that made all thyng of nowght,
And dyed on the rode :
Thys nyght yn my gardeyne it grewe ;
Behold wethyr it be false or trewe :— 230
They be fayre and good.
The usscher lyfte up the lede smartly,
And sawe the cheryse verily ;
He marveld in his mode.

The usscher seyde, ' Be Mari swet,
Chorle, thou comste not yn yett,
I tell the sekyrly,
But thou me graunte, without lesyng,
The thyrd part of thi wyunnyng,
Wan thou comste ayen to me.' 240
Sir Cleges sey non other von ¹ ;
Thereto he grauntyd sone anon ;
It woll non othyr be.
Than Sir Cleges with hevi chere
Toke hys sone and hys panere ;
Into the hall went he.

The styward walkyd there withall
Amonge the lordes in the hall,
That were rech in wede.
To Sir Cleges he went boldly, 250
And seyde, ' Ho made the soo hardi
To com into this stede ² ?
Chorle,' he seyde, ' thou art to bold :
Wythdrawe the with thy clothys olde
Smartly, I the rede.'

¹ 'Hope' : Old English *won*.

² Cf. our word 'homestead'.

'I have,' he seyð, 'a present browght
 From our Lord that us dere bowght,
 And on the rode gan blede.'

The panyer he toke the styward¹ sone,
 And he pullyd out the pyne
 As smartly as he myght.

260

The styward seyð, 'Be Mari dere,
 Thys sawe I never this tyme of yere

Syn I was man wrowght!
 Thou schalt com no nere the kyng
 But yf thowe graunt me myne askyng,
 Be hym that me bowght:

The thyrd part of the kynges yefte,
 That will I have, be my threfte,
 Ar forthere gost thou nott!'

270

.
 Sir Cleges sey non othyr bote²
 But his askyng graunte he most,
 And seyð with syynge sore:
 'Whatsoever the kyng reward,
 Ye schall have the thyrd part,
 Be yt lesse or more.'

Upe to the desse³ Sir Cleges went
 Full soborly and with good entent,
 Knelynge the kynge before.

Sir Cleges oncowyrd the panyere,
 And schewed the kynge the cheryse clere,
 On the ground knelynge.
 He seyð, 'Jesu our Savyor
 Sent the thys frewght with honor,
 On thys erth growynge.'

280

¹ So in Weber's text: the inversion may be a clerical error.

² 'Remedy': cf. 'it boots not'.

³ 'Dais'.

The kynge sye thes cheryse newe ;
 He seyde, ' I thanke Cryst Jesu ;
 This is a fayre neweynge ' .
 He commaundyde Sir Cleges to mete,
 And afterward he thought with hym to speke 290
 Wythout any faylynge.

.
 Whan all men were mery and glade,
 Anon the kynge a squire bade,
 ' Brynge nowe me befor
 The pore man that the cheryse browght .'
 He cam anon and teryde natt,
 Wythout any skorn ;
 Whan he cam before the kyng,
 On knese he fell knelynge,
 The lordes all befor.
 To the kyng he spake full styll :
 ' Lord,' he seyde, ' watte ys your will ?
 I am your man fre born .'

300

' I thanke the hartly,' seyde the kynge,
 ' Of thy yeft and presentynge,
 That thou hast nowe i-doo :
 Thowe hast onowryd all my fest,
 Old and yonge, most and lest,
 And worschepyd me also.
 Wattsoever thou wolt have
 I will the graunt, so God me save,
 That thyne hart standyth to.'

310

He seyde, ' Gramercy, lech kynge,
 Thys ys to me a comforynge,
 I tell you sekyrly :

¹ ' New Year's gift '.

For to have lond or lede ¹
 Or othyr reches, so God me spede,
 Yt ys to meche for me :
 But seth I schall chese my selfe,
 I pray you graunt me strokys twelve, 320
 To dele were lykyth me :
 Wyth my staffe to pay hem all
 To myn adverseryse in the hall,
 For send ² Charytè.'

Than aunsswerd Hewtar the kynge :
 'I repent my grauntetynge,
 That I to the made.
 Good,' he seyde, 'so mote I thee ³
 Thowe haddyst be better have gold or fee,
 More nede therto thou hade.' 330
 Sir Cleges seyde with a waunt ⁴,
 'Lord, yt ys your owyn graunte,
 Therefore I am full glade.'
 The kynge was sory therfore,
 But neverthelesse he grauntyd hym there ;
 Therefore he was full sade.

Sir Cleges went into the hall,
 Among the gret lordes all,
 Without any more.
 He sowght after the prowghd styward, 340
 For to yeve hym hys reward,
 Because he grevyd hym sore.
 He yaffe the styward sech a stroke
 That he fell down as a bloke,
 Before all that therin were :

¹ 'People', Old English *leode*.

² 'Saint'.

³ 'Prosper': Old English *thron*, to thrive.

⁴ 'Confidently': see Oxford Dictionary, s. v. 'Avaunt'.

And after he yafe him othyr thre,
 He seyde, 'Sore, for thy corteci,
 Smyghte me no more!'

Out of the hall Sir Cleges went,
 Moo to paye was hys entent
 Wythout any lett.

250

He went to the usscher in a breyde¹:
 'Have here sum strokys,' he seyde,
 Whan he wyth hym mete.

So that after and many a daye
 He wold warn² no man the waye,
 So grymly he hym grett³.

Sir Cleges seyde, 'Be my threft,
 Thou haste the thyrd part of my yefte,
 As I the behyght.'

360

Than he went to the portere,
 And four strokys he yave hym there:
 His part hade he there [too]:

So that after and many a daye,
 He wold warn no man the waye,
 Neythyr to ryde nether goo.

The fyrste stroke he leyde hym on
 He brake in to hys schuldyrbone,
 And his on arme therto.

Sir Cleges seyde, 'Be my threfte,
 Thowe has the thyrd parte of my yefte,
 The covenauante we made soo.'

370

Sir Cleges knelyd before the kynge,
 For he grauntyd hym hys askynge,
 He thanked hym cortesly.

¹ 'Hurry'.² 'Forbid'.³ 'Greeted'.

Specyally the kynge hym prayed
 To tell hym whye tho strokes he payed
 To hys men thre.
 He seyde that he myght nat com inward,
 'Tyll everych I grauntyd the thyrde partt 380
 Of that ye wold yeve me.
 With that I schuld have nowght myselfe ;
 Wherefore I yave hem strokes twelve :
 Methowt yt best trewly.'

The kynge seyde to hym than,
 'What is thy name, tell me, good man,
 Now anon ryght ?'
 'I hight Sir Cleges, so have I blysse,
 My ryght name yt ys, i-wysse :
 I was your owyn knyght.' 390
 'Art thou Sir Cleges, that servyd me,
 That was soo jentyll and soo fre,
 And so stronge on fyght ?'
 'Ye, sir Lord,' he seyde, 'so mote I thee.
 Tyll God in hevyn had vesyte¹ me :
 Thus poverte have me dyght.'

The kynge yave hym anon ryght
 All that 'longed to a knyght
 To rech his body wyth.
 The castell of Cardiffe he yave hym thoo, 400
 With many other yeftes moo,
 Miri to lyve and blyth.
 The knyght rode to dame Clarys his wyve,
 Fairer ladie was non olyve ;
 He schewed his yeftes swyth.

¹ 'Visited'.

LAWRENCE MINOT (1300 ?-1352 ?). Nothing is known for certain about his life. He was probably born in the N.E. Midlands, as is testified by the dialect which he uses, and from some of the allusions in his poems it may be conjectured that he became a soldier and fought in the wars of Edward III. His ballads, of which there are eleven in the only extant manuscript, are not marked by any great beauty of form, but give a vivid and militant description of the English victories over France and Scotland.

BALLAD

HOW EDWARD THE KING COME IN BRABAND
AND TOKE HOMAGE OF ALL THE LAND.

God that schope¹ both se and sand
Save Edward, king of Ingland,
Both body, saul and life,
And grante him joy withowten strif!
For mani men to him er wroth,
In Fraunce and in Flandres both;
For he defendes fast his right,
And tharto Jesu grante him might,
And so to do both night and day,
That yt may be to Goddes pay². 10

Oure king was cumen, trewly to tell,
Into Brabant for to dwell;
The kayser Lowis of Baverye,
That in that land than had no pere,
He, and als his sons two,
And other princes many mo,
Bisschoppes and prelates war thare fele³
That had ful mekill werldly wele,

¹ 'Created': Old English *scieppan*: cf. German *schöpfung*.

² 'Pleasure'.

³ 'Many'.

Princes and pople, ald and yong,
 Al that spac with Duche tung, 20
 All thai come with grete honowre
 Sir Edward to saue and socoure,
 And proferd him, with all thayre rede¹,
 Forto hald the kinges stede.

The duke of Braband, first of all,
 Swore, for thing that might bifall,
 That he suld both day and night
 Help sir Edward in his right,
 In toun, in feld, in frith and fen.
 This swore the duke and all his men, 30
 And al the lordes that with him lend²,
 And tharto held thai up thaire hend.
 Than king Edward toke his rest
 At Antwerp, whare him liked best ;
 And thare he made his moné³ playne,
 That no man suld say thare-ogayne⁴.
 His moné, that was gude and lele⁵,
 Left in Braband ful mekill dele ;
 And all that land, untill this day,
 Fars the better for that jorney. 40

When Philip the Valas herd of this,
 Therat he was ful wroth, i-wis ;
 He gert⁶ assemble his barounes,
 Princes and lordes of many tounes.
 At Pariss toke thai thaire counsaile,
 Whilk pointes might tham moste availe :
 And in all wise thai tham bithoght
 To stroy Ingland, and bring to noght.

¹ 'Counsel'.

² 'Came': Old English *lendan*, to arrive.

³ i.e. 'coined his money'.

⁴ i.e. 'might gainsay it'.

⁵ 'True' (our word 'leal').

⁶ 'Caused'.

Schipmen sone war efter sent,
 To here the kinges cumandment ; 50
 And the galaies men also,
 That wist both of wele and wo.
 He cumand than that men suld fare
 Till Ingland and for no thing spare,
 Bot bfin and sla both man and wife
 And childe, that none suld pas with life.
 The galay men held up thaire handes,
 And thanked God of thir tithandes ¹.

At Hamton, als I understand,
 Come the gaylayes unto land, 60
 And ful fast thai slogh ² and brend,
 Bot noght so mekill als sum men wend ³.
 For, or thai wened, war thai mett
 With men that sone thaire laykes lett ⁴.
 Sum was knocked on the hevyd ⁵,
 That the body thare bilevid ⁶ ;
 Sum lay stareand on the sternes,
 And sum lay knocked out thaire hernes ⁷ ;
 Than with tham was none other gle,
 Bot ful fain war thai that might fle. 70
 The galay men, the suth to say,
 Most nedes turn another way ;
 Thai soght the stremis fer and wide,
 In Flandres and in Seland syde.

Than saw thai whare Cristofer ⁸ stode,
 At Armouth, opon the fiude,
 Than wente thai theder all bidene ⁹,

¹ 'Tidings'.

² 'Slew'.

³ 'Thought' (so 'wened' in the next line).

⁴ 'Spoiled their sport'. 'Layke' from Old English *læc*, a game.

⁵ 'Head'. ⁶ 'Remained': Old English *belifan*. ⁷ 'Brains'.

⁸ Name of a famous English ship.

⁹ 'Forthwith'.

The galayes men with hertes kene,
 Viiij. and xl. galayes and mo,
 And with tham als war tarettes¹ two, 80
 And other many of galiotes²,
 With grete nounder of smale botes;
 All thai hoked on the flode
 To stele sir Edward mens gode."

Edward oure king than was noght there,
 Bot sone, when it come to his ere,
 He sembled all his men full still
 And said to tham what was his will.
 Ilk man made him redy then,
 So went the king and all his men 90
 Unto thaire schippes ful hastily,
 Als men that war in dede doghty.

Thai fand the galay men grete wane³,
 A hundereth ever ogaynes ane;
 The Inglis men put tham to were⁴
 Ful baldly, with bow and spere;
 Thai slogh thare of the galaies men
 Ever sixty ogaynes ten;
 That sum ligges yit in that mire
 All hevidles, with-owten hire. 100

The Inglis men war armed wele,
 Both in yren and in stele;
 Thai faght ful fast both day and night,
 Als lang als tham lasted might.
 Bot galay men war so many,
 That Inglis men wex all wery;

¹ Ships of heavy burden.

² Small galleys.

³ 'Plenty'.

⁴ 'Prepared to defend themselves': Old English *werian*, to defend.

Help thai soght, bot thare come nane,
Than unto God thai made thaire mane.

Bot sen the time that God was born,
Ne a hundreth yere biforn¹, 110
War never men better in fight
Than Ingliss men, whils thai had myght.
Bot sone all maistri gan thai mis ;
God bring thaire saules untill his blis !
And God assoyl tham of thaire sin,
For the gude will that thai war in ! Amen.

Listens now, and leves² me
Who-so lifes, thai sall se
That it mun be ful dere boght
That thir galay men have wrought. 120
Thai hoved still opon the flode,
And reved³ pouer men thaire gude ;
Thai robbed, and did mekill schame,
And ay bare Inglis men the blame.
Now Jesus save all Ingland,
And blis it with his haly hand ! Amen.

¹ i.e. since the Christian era, or a hundred years before it.

² 'Believe'.

³ 'Robbed' (cf. our words 'reft' and 'bereft').

CHAPTER IV

THE NATIONALIST REACTION

It was inevitable that the French conquest, of which mention has been made in the two preceding chapters, should arouse in certain quarters a feeling of reaction and protest. In our literature, as in our national life, the Normans had come to possess the land; our early Plantagenet kings were more French than English; the languages of the conquerors reigned paramount at the Court, and gradually extended their domain through the borders of all civilized society. Little by little our native tongue fell to obscure rank and menial uses: Wamba, in *Ivanhoe*, complains that the farm animals are called by English names when they are to be tended and by French names when they are to be eaten: and before the end of the thirteenth century a discontented patriot is found to proclaim:—

Ich wene ther ne beth in al the world contreys none
That ne holdeth to hor owe speche bote Engelonde one.

This feeling was intensified by the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War, and its first literary expression may be found in the ballads of Laurence Minot. But to Minot 'fas erat ab hoste doceri', and while the spirit of his poetry is intensely antagonistic to the French, in his versification he still acknowledged them as his masters. A further stage was imminent when the patriotic feeling should culminate and make one final and determined effort to shake off its yoke.

Shortly after the battle of Poitiers there began to arise in the Western Midlands a series of poems the formal object of which was to re-establish the style and the methods of Old English verse. By a deliberate

antiquarian revival they set themselves to discard foreign rhymes and foreign metres, and to go back to the rough-hewn alliterative stresses which had served for the fabric of our first poetry. Most uncompromising of them all was the *Vision of Piers the Ploughman*, a vigorous polemic against the rulers in Court and Church, written in the metre of *Beowulf*, and almost aggressively careful to gather its phrases as far as possible from an English vocabulary. Its opening lines¹:

In somer seson whan soft was the sonne
 I shope me in shroudes as I a shepe were,
 In habite as an heremite unholy of workes,
 Went wyde in pis world wondres to here.
 Ac on a May mornynge on Malverne hilles
 Me byfel a ferly of fairy, me thougte.

are enough to show how widely different is its style from that of *Sir Cleges*, which preceded it by only a few years. Its author, William Langland or Langley (born about 1331), is a satirist of a different type from Walter Map or the anonymous author of the *Land of Cokayne*. He has little humour, only an occasional grim smile, as in the fable of the rats: he lashes the corrupt life of his time in dead earnest and with an unsparing hand. As we think of the Fabliaux beside his work we can imagine the Roman courtiers flocking to an improvisation of Statius, and Juvenal with bent brows watching them as they pass.

Yet it is in a poem which for theme and treatment is closely analogous to a Fabliau that this nationalist movement attained its highest literary level. The story of *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*, of anonymous authorship, is a remarkable attempt to adapt the old epic form to the chivalrous and romantic spirit of the age. It is broken into irregular stanzas of alliterative verse, each ending with a short

¹ From the Clarendon Press Edition.

it marks a frontier-line in the development of our literature.

The points of contrast with *Beowulf* are salient enough. It is a far cry from the heroes on the ale-benches of Heorot to the knights and ladies dancing in Arthur's hall. *Beowulf* fights with a monster: Sir Gawain with an enchanter: the love-story wholly absent from the epic is an essential element of the romance: in the earlier poems the main topics are of the battlefield and the sea; in the later come three elaborate descriptions of hunting and of the traditional rules for dealing with the quarry. Again, in *Beowulf* the landscape has no direct bearing on the story; it is painted in a few broad touches as any traveller might see it: in *Sir Gawain*, especially at the end of the poem, it is carefully wrought into sympathy with the dramatic mood. The same holds good of the depiction of human feeling. In *Beowulf* a few simple types of primitive manhood: courage hardening into sternness, dignity which, tender towards a comrade, is adamant towards a foe. In *Sir Gawain* a far subtler play of emotion: chivalrous adventure, hope and misgiving, courtesy even in face of the temptress, a chastity of honour, which, in Burke's phrase, 'felt a stain like a wound'. This is not to say that *Sir Gawain* is the greater poem: it is great with a difference brought by six centuries of civilization. *Beowulf* is our first national epic: it discovers a new continent, it invents a new language, it is fresh with the winds of morning and vivid with the colours of the dawn. The romance is of a midday light, warmer and fuller, revealing a more copious and varied beauty, yet after all the successor and inheritor of the eastern sun.

Note.—The following translation, like that of the examples from *Beowulf*, is in the main a line-for-line rendering of the original, keeping as far as possible its alliteration and its phraseology. The object has been not to modernize the poem but to present it as faithfully as the changes in our language admit.

SIR GAWAYN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

King Arthur is holding his Christmas revels at Camelot. He has a custom that on great festivals he will not sit down to meat until he has seen some marvellous adventure, and he stands by the high seat waiting to see what will befall.

Lines 37-84.

THE king for Christmas lay at Camelot,
With many a peerless prince and noble proud ;
All fittingly the famous brotherhood
Of the round table, rich in revelry,
Made careless mirth : first in the tournament
Jousted full jollily these gentle knights,
Then went a carol-making to the court.
For there the feast was held for fifteen days,
With all the meat and mirth men could devise.
Such gladsome glee was glorious to hear, 10
Rare revelry by day, at night the dance,
For all was happiness in those high halls,
'Mid lords and ladies as they listed best.
They dwelt together with all world's delight,
The knights of most renown 'neath Christ himself
And loveliest ladies that had e'er had life ;
Thereto the comeliest king that court can hold :
For all this fair folk was in foremost youth,
The happiest under heaven. Most high in will
Was he their king, and trouble 'twere to tell 20
Of a more courteous company on earth.
Now on the first day of the new-born year
The feast was double served upon the dais
Unto the court. The king with knights was come
To hall, the chapel service once achieved,
With clear-voiced orison of chanting clerks,
And Nowell celebration held anew.

Then came the nobles forth to find their gifts,
Asked readily, and readily returned,
With rival jest and busy-tongued debate. 20
The ladies laughed aloud, though they had lost,
And he that gained was gay, as ye may guess ;
Thus all this mirth they made till time of meat.
When they had washed, in worthy guise they went
To take their seats by rank, the mightiest
Set at the place of honour. In their midst
Was Guenevere, all gay and featly garbed,
Upon the dais, delicately decked
In slender silk ; there rose above her head
A comely canopy of costly cloth 40
From far Toulouse, with tapestry of Tars,
Wrought and enriched with fairest gems of price.
No man might say with truth he ever saw
A lady lovelier to look upon,
As down the hall she glanced with eyes of grey.

Lines 107-300.

There stands the stalwart king beside his seat
By the high table, jesting in his talk
Full graciously ; Gawayn by Guenevere
Was set, and on her other side there sat
The doughty Agravayn à la dure main, 50
Both nephews to the king, and noble knights.
Above did Bishop Bawdewyn head the board,
And Ywain, Uryn's son, had there his place.
These sat upon the dais, served in sooth
Most honourably, and many a mighty man
Sat at the side. Then blared the trumpets loud
As the first course was borne into the hall,
Bright banners waved, and many a sounding drum
And piercing pipe made melody ; each knight

Felt his heart stirred within him at their call. 60
Then dainties were displayed, of divers kind,
Such plenty of fresh fare on many a dish,
That scarce before the folk a place they found
To set the silver, that in seemly wise
Held many meats. Therefore each man made mirth
As pleased him well without unwillingness ;
Each two had set between them dishes twelve,
And sparkling wine, and golden foaming ale.
Now will I of their service say no more,
Each man may ween full well there was no want. 70
Another noise all new drew nigh apace,
The king might have but little time for meat ;
Scarce for a short space had the music ceased,
And the first course been fitly served at Court,
When through the hall-door rushed a dreadful knight,
The hugest man in height beneath the heaven ;
Mighty and broad he was from throat to thigh,
His great limbs seemed a giant's ; yet was he
No mis-shaped monster, but in every point
Fashioned like lesser men ; save that he seemed 80
The merriest in his might that ever rode.
In back and breast his body was full big,
His waist, though slender, was right strongly made,
And all the features of his face were fair.
But for the colour of his countenance
Men had great marvel, for the mighty man,
Hostile in gaze, was all of brightest green ;
From head to foot one colour all his dress.
A narrow coat clung closely to his sides ;
Above, a splendid mantle nobly wrought, 90
And lined throughout with costly fur, hung down,
And o'er his shoulders hung a hood of fur.
Close-fitting hose he wore, fashioned of green,

And on his heels hard rang the golden spurs,
Fastened to silken bands of cunning work
Both rich and rare. His riding-boots were green ;
Green flashed the jewels in his belt, and green
The gems that studded all his rich array,
And shone from silken suit and saddle-bow.

'Twere trouble*half the trifles fair to tell 100

Pricked on his raiment ; beads of green and gold,
Insects and birds, and many another shape.

The pendants of his steed's caparison
Were green-enamelled, his arched saddle-bows,
And stirrups of his feet, were stained the same,
Ever a-gleam and glimmering with green stones.

A stalwart steed it was that he bestrode,
A great green horse full grievous to restrain,
Yet to his master was he mild and meek.

Right gaily was the man all geared in green, 110

And green the hair of master and of horse.

Fair flowing hair enfolds his shoulders round,
A beard big as a bush hangs o'er his breast,
Which, with the fair locks flowing from his head,

Was clipped above his elbows, cut full close,
That half his arms were hidden underneath

As in a kingly cape, covering his throat.

Much like it was the mighty horse's mane,
Well crisped and combed with many comely knots,

Plaited with golden threads in the fair green, 120

A strand of hair, and then a streak of gold.

His tail and top-knot twisted both the same,

And both were bound with bands of brightest green,

Wrought with rich stones, as far as reached his tail,

Then twisted to a thong with a tight knot,

Where brilliant bells of burnished gold did ring.

Such horse and horseman as upon him hied

Were ne'er beheld before within that hall.
As fierce as lightning looked he; all that gazed
And saw him with their eyes, had said the same, 130
The doughtiest man might not endure his dint.
The knight had neither hauberk-mail nor helm,
Gorget, nor plate that appertained to arms,
Nor shaft nor shield to shelter or to smite,^c
But in his hand he had a holly bough,
Which groweth greenest when the groves are bare.
A high, huge axe was in his other hand,
Cruel for any to describe in tale.
The head of it lay full a yard-length wide,
Grained of green steel and damascened of gold, 140
The blade bright burnished with a right broad edge,
As keen to shear as 'twere a razor sharp.
The handle of the great staff that he held
Was bound with iron, and from end to end
Was graven all in green with quaint device.
A lace was lapped about, looped at the head,
Hasped to the handle knotted to the shaft,
Attached thereto with many a tassel fair
Embroidered rich on borders of bright green.
Such the strange knight who hastens through the hall, 150
Fares to the dais, fearing nought of harm.
Greeted he none, but glanced high o'er all.
And first he spake, 'Where is your lord the king?
Fain would I see him, and right gladly here
Hold conference.' Therewith he cast his eye
O'er all the knights, and fared him back and forth,
Halted, and sought the highest in the hall.
Long time the warriors looked upon the knight,
For each man marvelled what the thing might mean,
That horse and rider such a hue should have, 160
Green as the growing grass and greener still,

Gayer than green enamel wrought on gold.
All studied him that stood there, and drew near,
Wondering in mute amaze what he would do,
For ne'er a marvel had they known like this ;
The folk deemed him a phantom or a fay.
Full many famous knights were feared to speak,
Each stared within his seat, still as a stone.
A swooning silence swept throughout the hall,
And every man was hushed as if in sleep. 170
I ween they waited not for weakly fear,
But some for courtesy, that first the king
Should speak the words of welcome to the wight.
Then Arthur views this venture from the dais,
Greeted him graciously, for ne'er aghast
Was he, and 'Welcome guest,' he said, 'be thou
Unto this place. Prince of this palace I,
And Arthur is my name. I urge thee now
Light down in friendly wise, and tarry here.
What is thy will we may hereafter wot.' 180
'So help me he that sits on high,' quoth he,
'Tis not my will to wait here any while,
But, since so fair is raised this folk's renown,
Thy house and heroes ever held the best,
Stoutest to ride on steeds in arms of steel,
Proud to perform in every gentle play ;
Here is high courtesy, as I have heard,
And this enticed me hither at this time.
Sure may ye be, by this same branch I bear,
I come in peace nor crave contentions here, 190
For, had I fared in company for fight,
A helm and hauberk have I both at home,
A shield and sharp edge of a shining lance,
Weapons enough to wield, I warrant thee.
But, since I seek no strife, soft are my weeds.

Yet, if thou be so bold as all men tell,
Graciously wilt thou grant the boon I ask
By right.' Then Arthur readily replied,
'Sir courteous knight, if thou crave battle bare,
Here shall not fail you fair and goodly fight.' 200
'Nay, strife I seek not, soothly for to say,
Here be but beardless boys upon this bench;
If I were hasped in arms on a high steed,
No man might match me in his puny might.
But in this court I crave a Christmas game,
Since it is Yule-tide, and the young new year,
And here are many hardy men and bold;
If any deems him daring in this house,
So bold of blood and resolute of mind,
That stoutly will he venture stroke for stroke, 210
This goodly blade I give him as my gift,
This heavy axe to handle as he list:
The first blow will I bide, bare as I am.
If any man dare do as I have said,
Let him come lightly, catch this weapon now,
See, I relinquish it, let it be his.
Straight will I give him here another stroke,
Upon this floor, unless thou grant me fair
To render it after a respite time,
A twelvemonth and a day; now tarry not, 220
Let him who has the courage speak in haste.'

For a moment all the knights remain silent. Arthur, ashamed of their tardiness, himself seizes the axe and prepares to accept the knight's challenge, but as he swings it, Gawayn steps forward and begs for the adventure. The king gives him the weapon, and Gawayn swears that on New Year's morn of the next year he will seek out the Green Knight and suffer him to repay the blow. When he asks the name and dwelling-place of his opponent, the Green Knight will tell him nothing save that he will find him at the Green Chapel.

Then the stranger bares his neck, and with one blow Gawayn severs the head from the body. To the horror of the company, the Knight never falters, but picks up his head, and calling on Sir Gawayn to remember his promise, rides swiftly out of the hall.

CHARACTER OF SIR GAWAYN

• Lines 640-664.

First faultless was he found in the five wits,
 Nor e'er had failed in feat of fingers five,
 And all his faith on earth was in five wounds,
 Which Christ upon the cross, as says the creed,
 Erstwhile endured ; in these he laid his trust
 Whenever he prepared him for the fight ;
 Next, he derived all his doughtiness
 From those five joys the gentle Queen of Heaven
 Had of her child ; and therefore chose the knight 230
 Her face should be fair fashioned on his shield,
 Painted upon the upper coverture :
 And looking there his courage aye he kept.
 The fifth five that the fair knight wont to use
 Were open frankness and good fellowship,
 Cleanness and ever-ready courtesy,
 And gentle pity that all strength surpassed.
 These five were set more fast upon the man
 Than on aught other ; all the five forsooth
 All fastened on five points that never failed. 240

So on his shining shield the knot was shaped,
 Wrought in red gold upon a field of gules,
 Five-pointed knot, which men call pentangle.

Gradually the year passes. Spring comes, with her warm showers and the song of birds ; then follows Summer with soft winds and fair blossoms ; and Summer in turn gives place to Autumn, when the leaves fall from the trees, and the grass

becomes grey and damp. Then, when Winter comes again, Gawayn thinks of his dread journey. After the feast of All Hallows he begs leave to set out on his quest, and having been solemnly invested with his armour, he rides forth on his good steed, Gryngolet.

Lines 713-840.

He climbed o'er many a cliff in country strange,
Far from his friends he rode a foreigner ;
By every ford and crossing where he went
He found a foe before him, strange to tell,
So foul and fierce that it behoved him fight ;
So many marvels met he in these hills,
That 'twere too tedious but to tell one-tenth. 250
Somewhiles he wars with serpents and with wolves,
Anon with robbers lurking in the rocks,
With forest-bears and bulls and with fierce boars,
And giant men that from the mighty fell
Set sore upon him ; had Christ served him not,
And had he not been doughty to endure,
Doubtless he had been stricken to the death.
For fiercer and more bitter than all foes
Was the keen winter, when the water smote
Clear and yet coldly from the clouds above, 260
And froze before it found the fallow earth.
Near slain was he with sleet ; he slept in arms
Many a night among the naked crags,
Where cold streams clattered from the rocky crests
And hung above his head in hardest ice.
So thus in pain and peril manifold
The lonely traveller wandered through the land
Till Christmas Eve ; he cried for counsel then,
Making his moan to Mary, that she might
Direct his wanderings to some dwelling-place. 270
Merrily by a mount at morning-tide

He rode across a forest, wond'rous wild.
High hills on either hand, with holts beneath
Of hoary oaks, a hundred at a time,
Hazels and hawthorns, huddled side by side,
Wreathed everywhere with rough and ragged moss;
While many a saddened bird upon bare boughs
Piped piteously for pain amid the cold.
The warrior went beneath on Gryngolet,
Through many a marsh and miry way alone, 280
And as he went he mourned at heart, and feared
He might not find a place to praise the Prince
Born on that very night of Virgin maid,
To stay our strife. Sighing, he said, 'Oh, God,
And Mary who art mildest mother dear,
Some lodging I beseech, that, as befits,
Mass I may hear, and matins on the morn.
Humbly I ask, and hastily thereto
I pray my Ave, Pater, and my Creed.'
Riding, he prayed, and sorrowed for his sins, 290
And several times he made the sacred sign,
Crying, 'Oh, Cross of Christ, now speed me well.'
Hardly three times had he thus hallowed him,
When in the wood he suddenly was 'ware
Of an abode, within an open place,
Well-moated, and on every side fenced in
With many a burly tree-bole all about.
The comeliest castle ever kept by knight,
Set in a plain, with park-land stretching wide,
Penned closely with a pikèd palisade 300
Enclosing all the trees for two miles round.
The house rose high upon the hither side,
And shone and glittered through the shining oaks.
Devoutly then the warrior doffed his helm,
And reverently with joy he renders thanks

To Jesus and Saint Julian, gentle ones,
Who graciously had guided him, and heard
His eager cry. 'Yet still,' quoth he, 'I crave
And pray you for a pleasant dwelling-place.'
Then goads he Gryngolet with his gilded heels, 310
And Fortune led him straight to the chief port
That brought him speedily before the bridge.
The bridge was raised, the barriers fast were barred,
The walls were well arrayed, and feared nor wind
Nor blustering blasts. The man stood on the bank :
He stayed there tarrying astride his steed.
Along the double ditch that passed the place,
The walls stood in the water wondrous deep,
And towered upward in huge loftiness
Of hard hewn stone unto the corbels high, 320
Strong fortified from base to battlement,
And girt with watch-towers, pierced with many a loop :
A better barbican he ne'er beheld.
Within, he saw the mighty mansion stand,
Well set with pinnacles and lofty towers,
Long-shafted pillars, carven capitals,
And chalk-white chimneys, twinkling to the sun.
On castellated roofs the painted spires
Clustered so close along the parapet,
They seemed as cut of paper, not of stone. 330
It fair betides the free knight on his foal
If he may come beneath the cloister arch,
And make with'in his lodging, while there lasts
In mirth and joy the time of holy-day.
Forthwith he called, and quick the porter came
To learn his errand and to welcome him.
'Good sir,' quoth Gawayn, 'wilt thou go for me
To pray a lodging from this castle's lord ?'
'By Peter,' answered he, 'full well I know

That you are welcome, sir, while you shall please 340
To rest you here.' With that he turned and called
On many servants to receive the knight ;
They let the drawbridge down, and dutifully
Came forth, bowing their knees on the cold earth,
In courteous greeting. Back they drew the gate
And graciously Sir Gawayn entered in.
With willing hands they held his saddle firm
While he dismounted ; many a mighty man
Stabled his steed. Then knights and stalwart squires
Came down to lead the lord in comely wise 350
Unto the hall. When he unhasped his helm
Full many hasted forward duteously
In service to receive it from his hand :
His sword and blazoned shield they bore away.
He gave them courteous answer, as they pressed
To hail the prince, and guide him to the hall,
Where the fair fire burned fiercely on the hearth.
Quickly the country's lord came from his room
To give his guest all honour, and he spake :—
' Welcome are ye to work as pleases you ; 360
All here is yours to use as seems you best.'
' Grand merci,' quoth Gawayn, ' God yield you grace.'

Gawayn is royally entertained ; and when, a few days later, he wishes to set out once more, the lord of the castle asks him on what adventure he is bound, that he is wandering alone instead of revelling with his comrades at Arthur's court. Gawayn tells him of his quest, and his host replies that the Green Chapel is not two miles from the castle. 'Tarry here, until New Year's Eve,' he says, 'and then I will send a guide with you to the Green Chapel.' Gawayn is delighted, and once more they give themselves to feasting. That night, the lord of the castle makes a covenant with Gawayn. He says that he will go hunting in the morning, and Gawayn shall stay at home and be entertained by the ladies of the household ;

whatever either knight wins in the day he shall give to the other at night. Accordingly, the next morning the strange knight rides off very early into the forest. While he is away his wife, who is very beautiful, makes Gawayn many rich offers. Gawayn refuses them all, and at last, as she leaves him, she turns with a laugh, and says that were he really Gawayn the Courteous, he would have craved a kiss. Gawayn asks for one, and having kissed him, she and her ancient lady-in-waiting entertain him for the rest of the day. When evening comes, her husband returns with a deer which he has killed. He gives Gawayn the deer; and Gawayn gravely gives him a kiss in return.

The second day is a repetition of the first, except that the lord of the castle brings back a wild boar instead of a deer. Again Gawayn gives him a kiss in exchange.

On the third, and last day, the lady becomes more pressing than ever.

Lines 1817-1866.

She offered him a rich ring golden-wrought,
Therein was set a bright and shining stone,
That glowed as the great sun with glinting gleams,
I wot 'twas guerdon of a wondrous wealth.

Yet readily refused he it and said,

'Fore God, I will no gifts, my lady gay,
None have I to return; so none will take.'

Then urged she him full earnestly, but he

370

Denied her her desire, and, with an oath,

Swore by his knighthood he would grant her not.

Then sorrowfully answered she and spake:—

'If ye refuse my ring because too rich

Ye deem it, nor so deeply in my debt

Would be, take then my girdle, though a gift

Less worthy far.' A lace she lightly took,

That clasped her kirtle 'neath the comely cloak,

Sewn with green silk, and shaped fair with gold,

Not 'broidered save about the borderings,

380

But all fair-fashioned. So she offered it
Unto the knight, and merrily besought
That he would take it, worthless though it were.
But he would not in any wise accept
Or gold or gifts, till God should send him grace
To do the devoir he had vowed to do.

'Therefore I pray, if it displease you not,
Cease from your care, for ne'er can I consent
To be your debtor ; yet your graciousness
Makes me beholden, and in heat or cold,
Lady, I serve you ever, while I live.'

'Leave ye this lace,' the lady answered him,
'Because 'tis simple, as indeed it seems ?
Lo, 'tis but little, and in worth 'tis less,
But he, who knows the virtues knit within,
Would praise it at a higher price, perchance,
For whoso girds him with this band of green,
While it is fastened round him fittingly,
There is no wight 'neath heaven may wound him then,
Nor slay him e'er by any sleight on earth.'

Deep mused Sir Gawayn : came then to his mind
How this might help him in his hour of need,
When at the chapel he must find his fate,
And how through this he might escape unhurt :
Therewith he suffered her and bade her speak.
She urged the belt upon him eagerly,
And prayed him greatly till he granted her ;
And so she gave it him with a good will ;
Beseeching him that he should tell it not,
But for her sake should hide it from her lord.
So plighted he his word that none should know
Save their two selves, and so he gave her thanks
Many a time with all his mind and heart.

That evening the Knight returns with a fox, which he gives

Gawayn ; but Gawayn only kisses him thrice, and says nothing of the magic girdle.

Early the next morning he sets out for the Green Chapel. His guide tells him that it is a place which no man passes alive, and advises him to seek some other way. But Gawayn replies that a true knight shuns no danger, and goes on alone.

Lines 2160-2388.

Then goads he Gryngolet, and goes his way :

He pushes past a bank beside a grove,
Rides by the rough heights right into the dale,
Then waits a-watch, amid the wilderness.
He sees no sign of house or harbourage,
But high and stony hills on either hand,
And rough and craggy rocks with rugged stones, 420
'Neath shadowy shapes of mountains perilous.

He halted, and held back his horse awhile,
Changing his course to seek the chapel near,
Yet saw he none on any side. It seemed
Full strange to him ; anon, hard by he saw
Before him, on a plain, a little hill,
A round hill by a bank beside the burn,
Where lay the ford across the angry flood,
That bubbled ceaselessly as though it boiled.
Then stays the knight his steed, stops by the hill, 430

Leaps lightly down, and links around a tree
His rein and bridle rich, with a rough branch.
Then wends he to the hill and wanders round,
Debating with himself what it might be.
A hole sank at the end, and on each side
'Twas grown with grass and green tufts everywhere,
And all within was utter emptiness,
A bare cave hollowed in the ancient crag ;
Nought might he make of it by any skill.

'Christ,' quoth the courteous knight, 'I cannot tell 440
If this be the green chapel ; sure the fiend

At midnight hour his matins here might say.
'Tis but a desert, a drear place of prayer,
O'ergrown with grass. Befits the green-clad knight
To do his devilish devotions here.
In my five wits I feel that it is he
Hath called this conference to kill me here ;
Ill-hap befall this chapel of mischance,
Most cursed kirk wherein I e'er have come.'
With high helm on his head and lance in hand 450
He roams beside the rocks of the rough cave,
When sudden in the hard crags of the hill,
From far beyond the brook, beside a bank,
He heard a wondrous noise: it clattered loud
Within the cliff as it would cleave it clean,
As if one on a whetstone ground a scythe ;
It whirred and whirled like water at a mill,
Rushing and roaring, horrible to hear.
'God,' quoth Sir Gawayn, 'that device, I guess,
Was made with meaning it should meet me here 460
Upon the way. Though God may work, alas,
It helps me little, yet though life be lost,
I swear there is no sound shall make me dread.'
Then clearly called the knight, and cried aloud,
'Who dwelleth here to hold discourse with me ?
The good Sir Gawayn goes upon his way ;
If any man will aught, let him come here,
Or now or never to fulfil his needs.'
Came answer from the bank above his head,
'Wait there, and thou shalt see my word fulfilled, 470
My promise paid.' Awhile the raging storm
Roared like a whirlwind ere the foe appeared,
Then came he by the crag, and swiftly climbed
From out his hole, wielding a weapon wild,
A Danish axe new dight, to yield his dint,

With massy steel, a-curve upon the shaft,
And eager edge sharp-whetted, four feet long,
If measured by the lace that hung from it.
The man was garbed in green as formerly,
From face to feet, his locks, and e'en his beard. 480
But now across the ground he stalks afoot,
Setting his steel axe to the sharpening stone.
When he the water reached, he would not wade,
But swung upon his axe, and stoutly strode
In wrath across the broad and snowy field,
Until he met Sir Gawayn ; yet for all,
Louted he not. 'Sweet sir,' the other said,
'In very truth thou holdest to thy tryst.'
'Gawayn,' the green man answered, 'God thee save,
I make thee welcome to mine own abode, 490
Thou tim'dst thy travel as a true man should.
Thou know'st the manner of our covenant,
That after twelve months should thy due be paid,
And I should yield it thee in the new year.
Verily in this vale we are alone,
No man to stop us, struggle as we may.
Do off thy helmet from thy head and have
Requital ; tarry not with more debate
Than I, when fell my head before thy stroke.'
'Fore God,' quoth Gawayn, 'Him who gave me life, 500
No way will I withhold thee from thy meed,
What mischief e'er may chance : now therefore strike
Thy stroke, while I unmoved stand, and thus
Deny not thy desire to work thy will.'
Then bent he from the neck and bowed him down,
Showing his shining neck all bare, nor shook,
Daring and dauntless, for dismay or dread.
The man in green makes ready mightily,
Seizes his savage tool to smite Gawayn ;

With all his body's force he bears it high,
And fiercely feigned as he would fell him quite,
For had it driven down thus dreadfully,
The king's brave knight had died there of the dint ;
But Gawayn sideways glanced at the axe,
Which downward flashed to deal the blow of death ;
Slightly his shoulder shrank at the sharp blade ;
Therewith the other held his axe aloft,
And thus, with words of pride, reproved the prince :

510

'Thou art not Gawayn, who is held so good,'

Quoth he, ' who feareth not a host of men

520

By hill or dale ; or e'er a harm or hurt

Thou feelest now, behold, thou fleest for fear ;

Ne'er could I trow such cowardice of him.

In Arthur's court I neither flinched nor fled,

I bore thy stroke, nor stirred I any strife,

My head fell to my feet, yet fled I not.

Thou showest fear before thy hurt befalls,

Therefore must I be called the mightier man.'

Quoth Gawayn, 'Once I cringed, but not again,

Yet know that if my head should fall to earth,

530

And strike the stones, I cannot it restore.

Then hasten, by thy faith, and find an end,

Deal me my destiny, and do it now,

For I will stand the stroke unflinchingly

Until thy tool hath touched me, by my troth.'

'Have at thee,' quoth the other, heaves it high

With look as grim as madness, fiercely strikes

Toward the prince, then stays and harms him not,

Withholding swift his hand before the hurt.

Stoutly doth Gawayn stand, nor stirs a limb,

540

As steadfast as a stone, or as a stock

Firm-fixed with hundred roots in rocky ground.

Then answered merrily the man in green :—

'Now that thy heart is whole, await my stroke,
Hold the gay helm that Arthur gave to thee,
Save now thy neck if that thou knowest how.'
In bitter wrath Sir Gawayn made reply,
'Lay on, I say, thou lingerest too long,
Or is it that thy heart misgiveth thee?'
'Faith,' quoth the other man, 'so fierce thou speak'st, 550
No longer will I let thee of thy will.'
Then strides he forth to strike, and sternly sets
Both lip and brow: 'twere little wonderment
That he who hoped no help misliked him.
Lightly he lifts his axe and lets it fall,
The biting blade upon the knight's bare neck;
Though hard he struck him, yet he gave no hurt,
But scathed him on the side and cut the skin,
And sharply bit the blade through the bright flesh,
That the fair blood fell earthwards from the wound. 560
When he beheld the blood bestain the snow,
He started forth a space, a full spear's length,
Quick caught his helm and cast it on his head,
Shot back his shoulders 'neath his shining shield,
Flashes his flaming sword, and fiercely speaks:
Ne'er since the man was of his mother born
Felt he within the world one half so gay:
'Now stay thy hand, knight, for I bear no more;
I stood the stroke nor stirred I any strife:
If more thou give, most mightily shall I 570
Repay the blow, and roughly deal with thee.
One stroke alone was in our covenant
At Arthur's court: I bid thee hold thine hand.'
The knight retreated resting on his tool,
Leant on the axe-edge, pressing stem to earth,
Stared at Sir Gawayn standing on the plain
Full proudly armed, and well it pleased his heart.

Then graciously he spake, with a great voice,
In sounding speech unto the prince he said :
'Brave knight, be thou not angered at thy hap, 580
No man unmannerly hath met thee here,
Nor done, but as devised at the king's court :
I promised thee a stroke and paid thee well,
Release I thee the rest, and every right ;
Had I been swifter, well could I have wrought
A doughtier blow, and dealt thee heavy scathe.
See, at the first in jest I menaced thee,
Dealt thee no dint, yet faithfully I struck
To keep the covenant that erst we made.
Truly thou camest, and truly kept thy tryst, 590
Gave me my due as any good man should.
The second time I struck at thee because
Thou gavest back the kisses of my wife.
For both I paid thee guerdon of bare blows,
Nor tried to harm. The true man truly pays
Nor thinks of fear, but thou, most lovely knight,
Hast failed the test, and therefore smote I thee,
For now my weed thou wearest, the woven lace,
Woven of my wife ; well wot I that, forsooth.
I know thy kisses and thy cossetings : 600
The wooing of my wife I worked myself
To try thee ; of a truth methinks thou art
The man most faultless that e'er fared on foot :
As pearls are held of price beside white peas,
So Gawayn, in good faith, beside all knights.
Yet lackedst thou a little loyalty,
But, since 'twas not for wooing or wantonness,
But all for love of life, less blame I give.'
Long stood the stalwart knight in study lost,
Trembling with sorrow, as he paused abashed, 610
And all his heart's blood hastened to his face ;

He shrank for shame, then found he words to say :

'O cursed cowardice and covetise

All villanous and vile, that virtue kill.'

He seized the lace and loosed the knot apart,

And tossed the magic girdle towards the knight.

'There is the false thing, foul may it befall ;

Cowardice taught me how to fear thy blow,

Joining with covetise ; thus I abjured

True openness of hand and loyalty,

620

Which both befit the nature of a knight.

Now false, and frail, and all afeared am I,

With deepest guilt of treachery and untruth ;

Knight, I acknowledge faulty was my way,

Grant me forgiveness, that I sin no more.'

Sad and ashamed, Gawayn turns to go back to Arthur's court.

Lines 2479-2528.

Wild ways within the land did Gawayn ride,

Who gained his life by grace, on Gryngolet.

Oft harboured he in houses, oft without,

And various ventures bore, and vanquished foes

In many a land ; yet will I linger not

630

To tell his prowess at the present time.

The hurt was whole that in his neck he had,

He girt about him still the shining belt,

Borne like a baldric bounden at his side.

The lace was knotted fast beneath his arm,

In token he was taken in a fault.

Thus cometh to the court the knight unscathed,

Welcomed with joy throughout the dwelling-place ;

The great ones held it gain that Gawayn good

Was come once more. King Arthur kissed the knight,

The queen likewise, and many a loyal lord,

641

All glad to give him greeting. Wondrously
He answers all who asked him how he sped ;
Tells all the times of trouble he endured,
What at the chapel chanced, the knight's good cheer ;
Then of the lady's love, and, last, the lace.
The scar in his bare neck he showed to them,
Which, for his lack of loyalty, he took
From the man's hands ; and when he made it known,
He grieved and groaned for grief and for despair, 650
The shameful colour came upon his cheek :
'Lo, lords,' quoth he, and handled then the lace,
'This brand of blame I bear upon my neck,
This is the grief and loss that I have gained,
This mark of cowardice and covetousness.
As token I was taken in untruth,
Lo, I must wear it to the end of life,
For none, unhappily, may hide his harm,
And when it once is got it ne'er will go.'
The king with all the court comforts the knight, 660
Loudly they laughed, and lovingly agreed
That all the lords and ladies who belonged
To Arthur's table, every one should wear,
Among the brotherhood, a belt of green,
A baldric bound across them for his sake.
'Twas reckoned the Round Table's first renown,
And he who won it ever honoured it.
Thus, as is written in the old romance,
This doughty deed was done in Arthur's day,
Whereof the book of Brut bears witness well ; 670
Since the fierce Brutus fared hither first,
When the assault and siege at Troy had ceased,
In truth full many ventures have befallen
Even as this erewhile. And so may He
Who bore the crown of thorns bring us to bliss.

CHAPTER V

CHAU CER

WHILE the conflict was being waged between French civilization and English simplicity, there was being brought up at the Court a London boy, page in one of the Royal households, whose destiny it was to effect their reconciliation. Chaucer's early training was almost entirely French: one of his earliest works was a version of the *Roman de la Rose*; others of about the same period were modelled after the current Romantic style which he afterwards gently satirized in the *Rime of Sir Thopas*. For a time it looked as though his work was to be merely a heightened and polished expression of the courtly manner, an effluence from the prevailing tradition rather than that 'well of English undefiled' which has been, in greater or less degree, the source of all our subsequent literature. Then his allegiance was shaken by the Italian mission (1372), which taught him a newer and deeper melody. In the growing maturity of his life—for he was thirty-two when he was sent as envoy to Genoa—he came under the spell of Dante, of Petrarch, of Boccaccio, the last of whom, as Mr. Stopford Brooke says, 'taught him to tell a story exquisitely'. For a time his work was intimately affected by Italian influence: then his native English rose in the ascendant, and his great masterpiece is one of the finest examples in history of a national idiom enriched but not overlaid by study in foreign schools. As Bach transcribed the Italian music of Vivaldi and the French music of Couperin, and grafted them on a German stock until they grew with its sap and blossomed with its flowers, so Chaucer, who

learned to write verse from Jean de Meung and to paint manners from Boccaccio, remains the most distinctive before Shakespeare of our English poets. It happened that about the time of the *Canterbury Tales* the progress of our language received a considerable impetus from Wiclif, whose translation of the Bible, in 1380, did more than any preceding work to establish a native speech. Chaucer took up the instrument, retuned the strings, and drew from them harmonies that have never lost their sweetness.

With the exception of the Chronicle, an exception which hardly counts, he tried his hand at all current forms of composition and excelled in all. We have no better sermon of the time than the *Parson's Tale*, or the *Tale of Melibeus*, or the *Monk's Tale*; no better hymn than that to the Virgin; no better Lives of Saints than the tales told by the Nun and the Prioress. For satire we have the Prologue to the *Pardoner's Tale*; for allegory the *Book of the Duchess* and the *Parliament of Fowls*, widely different in tone but of equal mastery; the short story may be illustrated by the Clerk, the Merchant, and the Wife of Bath; the animal-story (a favourite form of the Middle Ages) by the Nun Priest; ballads and songs by *Truth*, by *Steadfastness*, and by many of the minor poems. In Romance he ranges from the chivalry of the *Knight's Tale* and the 'amourism' of *Troilus and Cressida* to the semi-burlesque of the Squire and the pure burlesque of *Sir Thopas*: he makes his contribution to ethics in his translation of Boethius, and to science in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* and the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. And not only is the range wide: it is covered throughout with wonderful familiarity and power, with that clearness of knowledge which is implanted as it were by nature, and which can transmute the dullest and most leaden erudition in the alembic of its own genius.

But it is in the depiction of human character that he stands highest. Here are all his treasures of delicate and sympathetic observation, of genial humour and kindly satire, of golden phrases that have passed into the currency of the language. Well might Dryden say that he knew the Pilgrims as though he had supped at the Tabard. They pass before us in distinct personality—a few vivid touches, and each portrait is complete: we can see them, we can hear their voices, we can follow their fortunes after the pilgrimage is ended. There are six and twenty people in the Prologue, and no two of them are alike: indeed we feel that Chaucer could have indefinitely multiplied their number without imperilling his limitless resource. It is only the great artists who can show this richness and variety, who can scatter with a full hand and never repeat the gift.

As an example of Chaucer's characterization we may take the Squire. He is twenty years of age, fresh, adventurous, inexperienced, the youngest man in the company, and evidently pleased at the notice and attention of his elders. With what courtesy does he begin his story: with what pomp and circumstance does he introduce the magic horse, which, when he gets fairly under way, he totally forgets: with what ingenuous charm does he make parade of his learning; with what ardour does he follow the digression which leads him away from his main issue. After six hundred lines he has advanced no further than an episode; but he is just beginning to feel his strength, he has enough material to carry him all the way to Canterbury; he proposes to start on the adventures of Cambuscan and of Algersif, and of Camballo; he draws breath for another canto of his delightful and interminable narrative; and then the Franklin intervenes. Never were flood-gates more delicately closed; the eloquent voice is hushed

by a compliment to its eloquence, and we can imagine the smile, half amusement and half relief, which passes, for a discreet moment, across the lips of the company. The whole thing is as diverting as a scene of Molière; it is light-handed, it is good-humoured, and it leaves us on the best of terms with everybody concerned.

A special word should be said as to Chaucer's treatment of women. Before his time they had played the part commonly assigned to them in chivalrous romance; adored without comprehension and celebrated without insight. But with the 'good fair White' a new page is turned; we have a heroine of flesh and blood, set in the high light of panegyric, yet intensely and exquisitely human. For a companion picture we may take the pathos of Cressida's faithlessness and sorrow,¹ which, though dimmed to our eyes by the lustre of a greater genius, is a true and living expression of genuine feeling. The women of the *Tales*, too, are not less real than the men; they are equally consistent, equally distinctive; as far removed from the shadowy temptress of Sir Gawain as she is from the Princess Freawaru. There has come into English literature a new insight, a new vitality; there has been planted a seed which was to come to fruition in the great heroines of the Elizabethan drama.

Again, Chaucer's narrative is more rapid than that of preceding romances.² His digressions, unless obviously intentional, are few in number, his descriptions are brief and vivid, the story runs its course with a firm rein. The little touches of landscape, always accessory, are painted with evident love, and recall his own statement that the study of birds and flowers was the only thing that would

¹ See *Troilus and Cressida*, e.g. Book iv, l. 103, &c., and Book v, l. 151, &c.

² Contrast, for instance, the opening of the *Squire's Tale* with that of *Sir Gawain*.

draw him from his books. And through all these shines the temper of a noble and lovable man. His humour, if sometimes broad, is never malicious; it is often tender and affectionate. He has a generous love of chivalry, of purity, of refinement; a religion so deep that it can afford to be quiet, and so charitable that it is intolerant of nought save imposture; a wide human sympathy from which nothing of wholesome manhood is alien. In the record of mediaeval literature he is surpassed by one poet alone: of his own age and country he was the acknowledged and accepted master.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (about 1340-1400), son of John Chaucer, citizen and vintner, was born in London. He began his career as a page in the household of Elizabeth, wife of Lionel Duke of Clarence, and throughout his life was more or less continuously in the service of the Court. One of his earliest works was a translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, and in all his writings before 1372 he shows considerable traces of French influence. Among them may be mentioned a translation of Deguileville's *Prayer to the Virgin* (quaintly entitled *A. B. C.*, from the fact that the stanzas begin with successive letters of the alphabet), the *Book of the Duchesse* (1369), written in memory of Blanche, the wife of John of Gaunt, and the *Lyfe of Sainte Cecyle* (about 1370), which was afterwards incorporated in the *Canterbury Tales*. In 1372 he was sent to Italy, where he remained for eleven months, and where he made that acquaintance with classical Italian literature which is so evident in the writings of his second period. On his return to England he was appointed Comptroller of Wool, and eight years later Comptroller of Petty Customs, two lucrative offices of which he was allowed to perform the duties by deputy. The works of his second period (1372-1384) include the *Complaint to his Lady*, the *Complaint of Mars*, the *Parlement of Foules*, the unfinished *Hous of Fame*, and the original versions of *Palamon and Arcite*, the *Tale of Melibeus*, the *Personer's Tale*, and the *Man of Lawe's Tale*. During these years he was sent on many secret missions to Flanders, France, and Italy, in which he bore him-

self with good success. At the beginning of 1386 he was returned to Parliament as a knight of the shire for Kent, but Gloucester's regency was adverse to his fortunes, and before the end of the year he was dismissed from both his offices. However, Richard II on resuming power appointed him Clerk of the King's Works at Westminster, and granted him a pension, which was doubled by Henry IV. Among the works of his third period (1386-1400), the most important are the *Legend of Good Women* (1386), the final version of the *Canterbury Tales* (from 1386 onward), and the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, written in 1391 for his 'little son Lewis'. He died on Oct. 25, 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

BOOK OF THE DUCHESS

THE GODE FAIRE WHYTE

Lines 848-865.

I SAW hir daunce so comlily,
 Carole and singe so swetely,
 Laughe and pleye so womanly,
 And loke so debonairly,
 So goodly speke and so frendly,
 That certes, I trow, that evermore
 Nas seyn so blisful a tresore.
 For every heer [up]on hir hede,
 Soth to seyn, hit was not rede,
 Ne nouthur yelw¹, ne broun hit nas;
 Me thoghte, most lyk gold hit was.
 And whiche eyen my lady hadde!
 Debonair, goode, glade, and sadde,
 Simple, of good mochel², noght to wyde;
 Therto hir look nas not a-syde,
 Ne overthwert³, but beset so wel,
 Hit drew and took up, everydel⁴,
 Alle that on hir gan beholde.

¹ 'Yellow'. ² 'Size'. ³ 'Askance'. ⁴ 'Altogether'.

Lines 878-938.

Therwith hir liste so wel to live,
 That dulnesse was of hir a-drad. 20
 She nas to sobre ne to glad;
 In alle thinges more mesure¹
 Had never, I trowe, creature.
 But many oon with hir loke she herte,
 And that sat hir ful lyte at herte,
 For she knew no-thing of hir² thoght;
 But whether she knew, or knew hit noght,
 Algate she ne roghte of hem a stree³!
 To gete hir love no ner⁴ nas he
 That woned⁵ at home, than he in Inde; 30
 The formest was alway behinde.
 But gode folk, over al other,
 She loved as man may do his brother;
 Of whiche love she was wonder large,
 In skilful places that bere charge⁶.
 Which a visage had she ther-to!
 Allas! myn herte is wonder wo
 That I ne can discryven hit!
 Me lakketh bothe English and wit
 For to undo⁷ hit at the fulle; 40
 And eek my spirits be so dulle
 So greet a thing for to devyse.
 I have no wit that can suffyse
 To comprehende[n] hir beaute;
 But thus moche dar I seyn, that she
 Was rody, fresh, and lyvely hewed;
 And every day hir beaute newed.
 And negh⁸ hir face was alder-best⁹;

¹ 'Proportion'. ² 'Their'. ³ 'All the same she cared not
 a straw for them'. ⁴ 'Nearer'. ⁵ 'Dwelt'. ⁶ i.e. 'where
 men had a claim on her, and where the matter was of consequence'.
⁷ 'Reveal'. ⁸ 'Almost'. ⁹ 'Best of all'.

For certes, Nature had swich lest¹
 To make that fair, that trewly she
 Was hir cheef patron of beautee,
 And cheef ensample of al hir werke,
 And moustre²; for, be hit never so derke,
 Me thinketh I see hir ever-mo.
 And yet more-over, thogh alle tho
 That ever lived were now a-lyve,
 [They] ne sholde have founde to discryve
 In al hir face a wikked signe;
 For hit was sad³, simple, and benigne.

50

And which a goodly softe speche
 Had that swete, my lyves leche⁴!
 So frendly, and so wel y-grounded,
 Up al resoun so wel y-founded,
 And so tretable⁵ to alle gode,
 That I dar swere by the rode,
 Of eloquence was never founde
 So swete a sowninge facounde⁶,
 Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse,
 Ne bet coude hele; that, by the masse
 I durste swere, thogh the pope hit songe,
 That ther was never through hir tonge
 Man ne woman gretly harmed;
 As for hir, [ther] was al harm hid;
 Ne lasse flatering in hir worde,
 That purely⁷, hir simple recorde
 Was founde as trewe as any bonde,
 Or trouthe of any mannes honde.
 Ne chyde she coude never a del⁸,
 That knoweth al the world ful wel.

60

70

¹ 'Such delight' (Germ. *Lust*). ² 'Pattern'. ³ 'Grave'
 (cf. 'gladde and sadde,' l. 13). ⁴ 'Healer'. ⁵ 'Amenable'.
⁶ i. e. 'eloquent voice'. ⁷ 'Indeed'. ⁸ 'At all'.

CANTERBURY TALES

PROLOGUE. Lines 1-207.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote ¹
 The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
 And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
 Of which vertu ² engendred is the flour;
 Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
 Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
 The tendre croppes ³, and the yonge sonne
 Hath in the Ram ⁴ his halfe cours y-ronne,
 And smale fowles maken melodye,
 That slepen al the night with open yē, 10
 (So priketh hem nature in hir corages ⁵):
 Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
 (And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
 To ferne halwes ⁶, couthe ⁷ in sondry londes;
 And specially, from every shires ende
 Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
 The holy blisful martir ⁸ for to seke,
 That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
 In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay 20
 Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
 To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
 At night was come in-to that hostelrye
 Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
 Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
 In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,

¹ 'Sweet'. ² 'By virtue of which'. ³ 'Shoots'. ⁴ The
 sign from the middle of March to that of April. ⁵ 'Hearts'.
⁶ 'Distant saints'. ⁷ 'Known'. ⁸ St. Thomas à Becket.

And wel we weren esed¹ atte beste.

And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, 30
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon²,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree ; 40
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre³)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

At Alisaundre⁴ he was, whan it was wonne ;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne⁵
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce⁶.
In Lettow⁷ hadde he reysed and in Ruce⁸,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade⁹ at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir¹⁰, and riden in Belmarye¹¹.
At Lyeys¹² was he, and at Satalye¹³,

¹ 'Entertained'. ² 'Every one'. ³ 'Further'. ⁴ 'Alexandria'.

⁵ i. e. sat at the head of the table.

⁶ 'Prussia'.

⁷ 'Lithuania'.

⁸ 'Russia'.

⁹ 'Granada'.

¹⁰ 'Algeciras'.

¹¹ Belmarye and Tramissene were Moorish kingdoms in Africa.

¹² 'Ayas' in Armenia.

¹³ 'Attalia' in Asia Minor.

Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See¹

At many a noble aryve² hadde he be.

60

At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,

And foughten for our feith at Tramissene

In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.

This ilke worthy knight had been also

Somtyme with the lord of Palatye³,

Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:

And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys⁴.

And though that he were worthy, he was wys,

And of his port as meke as is a mayde.

He never yet no vileinye ne sayde

70

In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.

He was a verray parfit gentil knight.

But for to tellen yow of his array,

His hors were gode, but he was nat gay⁵.

Of fustian he wered a gipoun⁶

Al bismotered⁷ with his habergeoun⁸;

For he was late y-come from his viage,

And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,

A lovyere, and a lusty bachelor,

80

With lokkes crulle⁹, as they were leyd in presse.

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.

Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,

And wonderly deliver¹⁰, and greet of strengthe.

And he had been somtyme in chivachye¹¹,

In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,

And born him wel, as of so litel space,

In hope to stonden in his lady grace.

¹ i.e. Eastern Mediterranean.

² 'Muster'.

³ 'Palathia', in

Asia Minor.

⁴ 'Great renown'.

⁵ i.e. in apparel.

⁶ 'Vest'.

⁷ 'Stained'.

⁸ 'Coat of mail'.

⁹ 'Curly'.

¹⁰ 'Active'.

¹¹ 'Expedition'.

Embrouded¹ was he, as it were a mede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede. 90
 Singinge he was, or floytinge², al the day ;
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his goune, with sleeves longe and wyde.
 Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
 He coude songes make and wel endyte,
 Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
 So hote he lovede, that by nightertale³
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he, and servaunts namo
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so ;
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene ;
 A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily ;
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly :
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
 And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
 A not-heed⁴ hadde he, with a broun visage. 110
 Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer⁵,
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,
 Harneised⁶ wel, and sharp as point of spere ;
 A Cristofre⁷ on his brest of silver shene.
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik⁸ was of grene ;
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,

¹ 'Embroidered'.

² 'Fluting'.

³ 'Night-time'.

⁴ 'Cropped head'.

⁵ 'Arm-guard' (used by archers).

⁶ 'Furnished'.

⁷ A brooch, with the figure of St. Christopher.

worn for good luck.

⁸ 'Belt'.

That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy ;
 Hir gretteste ooth was but by sēynt Loy¹ ; 120
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely ;
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly² ,
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle ;
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe, 130
 That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing³ sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
 And sikerly she was of greet disport⁴ ,
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere⁵ 140
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
 And to ben holden digne⁶ of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
 Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
 With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed⁷ .
 But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte :
 And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150

¹ A harmless oath, because St. Loy (patron of goldsmiths) was not
 a Scriptural saint. ² 'Neatly'. ³ 'Fragment' (lit. fourth part).
⁴ 'Gaiety'. ⁵ 'Behaviour'. ⁶ 'Worthy'. ⁷ 'Cake' (Fr. *gâteau*).

Ful semely hir wimpel¹ pinched was ;
 Hir nose tretys² ; hir eyen greye as glas ;
 Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed ;
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed ;
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe ;
 For, hardily³, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
 A peire of bedes, gauded⁴ al with grene ;
 And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene, 160
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
 That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES THREE.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrye⁵,
 An out-rydere, that lovede venerye⁶ ;
 A manly man, to been an abbot able.
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable :
 And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
 Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere 170
 And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle
 Ther as⁷ this lord was keper of the celle.
 The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit⁸,
 By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
 This ilke⁹ monk leet olde thinges pace,
 And held after the newe world the space¹⁰.
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen¹¹,
 That seith, that hunters been nat holy men ;
 Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
 Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees ; 180

¹ 'Veil'. ² 'Well-proportioned'. ³ 'Certainly'.
⁴ 'Gauds' were the larger beads in the rosary. ⁵ 'Above all others'.
⁶ 'Hunting'. ⁷ i.e. 'where'. ⁸ St. Benedict
 and his disciple St. Maur established the two oldest rules of
 monastic discipline. ⁹ 'Same'. ¹⁰ 'His course' (Skeat).
¹¹ 'He would not give a plucked hen for the text ...'

This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
 But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
 And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
 What sholde he studie, and make himselfen wood¹,
 Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
 Or swinken² with his handes, and laboure,
 As Austin bit³? How shal the world be served?
 Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
 Therefore he was a pricasour⁴ aright;
 Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight; 190
 Of priking and of hunting for the hare
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleeves purfiled⁵ at the hond
 With grys⁶, and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
 He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pin:
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
 And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
 He was a lord ful fat and in good point⁷; 200
 His eyen stepe⁸, and rollinge in his heed,
 That stemed⁹ as a forneys of a leed¹⁰;
 His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat;
 He was nat pale as a for-pyned¹¹ goost.
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

Lines 235-308.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.

¹ 'Mad'. ² 'Toil'. ³ 'As St. Augustine bids'. ⁴ 'Hard rider'.
⁵ 'Edged'. ⁶ 'Fur of the grey squirrel'. ⁷ 'In good condition' (Fr. *embonpoint*). ⁸ 'Bright' (O.E. *stēap*).
⁹ 'Shone'. ¹⁰ 'Cauldron'. ¹¹ 'Wasted'.

As lene was his hors as is a rake, 210
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy¹;
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
 For him was lever² have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
 Than robes riche, or fithele³, or gay sautrye⁴.
 But al be that he was a philosophre, 220
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
 But al that he mighte of his freendes hente⁵,
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye⁶.
 Of studie took he most cure⁷ and most hede.
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
 And that was seyð in forme and reverence,
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence⁸.
 Souninge in⁹ moral vertu was his speche, 230
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

Lines 445-541.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,
 But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe¹⁰.
 Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt¹¹,
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

¹ 'Upper coat' (the last syllable of 'courtepy' is the same as the first of 'pea-jacket').

² 'He would rather'.

³ 'Fiddle'.

⁴ 'Psaltery'.

⁵ 'Get'.

⁶ 'Study'.

⁷ 'Care'.

⁸ 'Meaning'.

⁹ 'Agreeing with'.

¹⁰ 'Pity'.

¹¹ 'Skill'.

In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to th' offring¹ biforn hir sholde goon;
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
 That she was out of alle charitee.
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground²; 240
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
 That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
 Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
 Withouten other compaigne in youthe;
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe³.
 And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem; 250
 She hadde passed many a straunge stream;
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
 In Galice at seint Jame⁴, and at Coloigne.
 She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
 Gat-tothed⁵ was she, soothly for to seye.
 Up-on an amblere⁶ esily she sat,
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe⁷;
 A foot-mantel⁸ aboute hir hipps large,
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe. 260
 In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe⁹.
 Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce.
 A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a povre PERSON of a toun;

¹ Allusion to 'Relic Sunday', when offerings were made at the altar. ² 'Texture'. ³ 'At present'. ⁴ St. James of Compostella in Galicia. ⁵ i.e. teeth wide apart (Dutch *gat*, 'a hole').
⁶ 'Nag'. ⁷ 'Shield'. ⁸ 'Riding-petticoat'. ⁹ 'Chat'.

But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche ;
 His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent, 270
 And in adversitee ful pacient ;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes¹.
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Un-to his povre parissshens aboute
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lasse² nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte 280
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte³,
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte ;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte ;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shall iren do ?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed⁴ man to ruste ;
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive, 290
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold live.
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
 And ran to London, un-to seynt Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterie⁵ for soules,
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde⁶ ;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,

¹ 'Times'. ² 'Ceased'. ³ 'Great and little'. ⁴ 'Lay'
 (O.E. *lanced*, Lat. *laicus*). ⁵ Chapel in which Masses were sung
 for the dead. ⁶ 'Retired'.

So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie ;
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and vertuous, 300
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne¹,
 But in his teching discreet and benigne.
 To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse :
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben² sharply for the nones.
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
 He wayted after³ no pompe and reverence, 310
 Ne maked him a spyced⁴ conscience,
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother⁵,
 A trewe swinker and a good was he,
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte⁶,
 And thanne his neighebour right as himselve. 320
 He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke⁷ and delve,
 For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
 Withouteen hyre, if it lay in his might.
 His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel⁸.
 In a tabard⁹ he rood upon a mere¹⁰.

¹ 'Haughty'. ² 'Rebuke'. ³ 'Looked for'. ⁴ 'Scrupulous'.
⁵ 'Load'. ⁶ 'Whether he were pleased or pained'. ⁷ 'Ditch'.
⁸ 'Chattels'. ⁹ 'Sleeveless coat'. ¹⁰ 'Mare'.

Lines 747-818.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
 And to the soper sette us anon ;
 And served us with vitaille at the beste.
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste¹. 330
 A semely man our hoste was with-alle
 For to han been a marshal in an halle ;
 A large man he was with eyen stepe,
 A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe² :
 Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
 And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
 Eek therto he was right a mery man,
 And after soper pleyen he bigan,
 And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
 Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges ; 340
 And seyde thus : ' Now, lordinges, trewely,
 Ye been to me right welcome hertely :
 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
 I ne saugh³ this yeer so mery a companye
 At ones in this herberwe⁴ as is now.
 Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
 And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
 Ye goon to Caunterbury ; God yow spede,
 The blisful martir quyte yow your mede⁵. 350
 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
 Ye shapen yow⁶ to talen⁷ and to pleye ;
 For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
 To ryde by the weye dounb as a stoon ;
 And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.

¹ 'Pleased'. ² 'Cheapside'. ³ 'Saw'. ⁴ 'Inn' (same word as 'harbour'). ⁵ 'Pay you your reward'. ⁶ 'Set yourselves'. ⁷ 'Tell tales'.

And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
 Now for to stonden at my jugement,
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
 To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye, 360
 Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
 But ¹ ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
 Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.²

Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
 Us thoughte it was nought worth to make it wys³,
 And graunted him withouten more avys,
 And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;
 But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn, 370
 That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye⁴,
 In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
 To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
 And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
 Of aventures that whylom⁵ han bifalle.
 And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
 Tales of best sentence and most solas⁶,
 Shal have a soper at our aller cost⁷

Here in this place, sitting by this post, 380
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
 And for to make yow the more mery,
 I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
 And who-so wol my jugement withseye
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
 And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
 Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,

¹ 'Unless'. ² i.e. 'to deliberate on it'. ³ i.e. 'to shorten
 your way with'. ⁴ 'Once upon a time'. ⁵ 'Mirth'.
⁶ 'At the cost of us all'.

And I wol erly shape me therfore.'

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore 390
 With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
 That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
 And that he wolde been our governour,
 And of our tales juge and reportour,
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys ;
 And we wold reuled been at his devys,
 In heigh and lowe ; and thus, by oon assent,
 We been acorded to his jugement.

THE SQUIRE'S TALE

THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE

'SQUIER, com neer, if it your wille be,
 And sey somwhat of love ; for, certes, ye
 Connen¹ ther-on as muche as any man.'
 'Nay, sir,' quod he, 'but I wol seye as I can
 With hertly wille ; for I wol nat rebelle
 Agayn your lust ; a tale wol I telle.
 Have me excused if I speke amis,
 My wil is good ; and lo, my tale is this.'

HERE BEGINNETH THE SQUIRE'S TALE

At Sarray², in the land of Tartarye,
 Ther dwelte a king, that werreyed³ Russye, 10
 Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty man.
 This noble king was cleped Cambinskan,
 Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
 That ther nas no-wher in no regioun
 So excellent a lord in alle thing ;
 Him lakked noght that longeth⁴ to a king.

¹ 'Know'. ² 'Sarai', now 'Tsarev', near the mouth of the Volga. ³ 'Warred against'. ⁴ 'Belongeth'.

As of the secte of which that he was born
 He kepte his lay¹, to which that he was sworn;
 And ther-to he was hardy, wys, and riche,
 And piȝtous and just, alwey y-liche²; 20
 Sooth of his word, benigne and honourable,
 Of his corage as any centre³ stable;
 Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous⁴
 As any bachelor of al his hous.
 A fair persone he was and fortunat,
 And kepte alwey so wel royal estat,
 That ther was nowher swich another man.
 This noble king, this Tartre Cambinskan
 Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
 Of whiche th'eldeste highte Algarsyf, 30
 That other sone was cleped Cambalo.
 A doghter hadde this worthy king also,
 That yongest was, and highte Canacee.
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee,
 It lyth nat in my tonge, n'in my conning;
 I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing.
 Myn English eek is insufficient;
 It moste been a rethor⁵ excellent,
 That coude⁶ his colours longing for⁷ that art,
 If he sholde hir discryven every part. 40
 I am non swich, I moot speke as I can.
 And so bifel that, whan this Cambinskan
 Hath twenty winter born his diademe,
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,
 He leet the feste of his nativitee
 Don cryen⁸ thurghout Sarray his citee,

¹ 'Religious belief'. ² 'The same'. ³ The universe was
 supposed to revolve round an immovable centre. ⁴ 'Ardent'.
⁵ 'Orator'. ⁶ 'Knew'. ⁷ 'Belonging to'. ⁸ 'Be
 proclaimed'.

The last Idus¹ of March, after the yeer.
 Phebus the sonne ful joly was and cleer;
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun
 In Martes face, and in his mansioun
 In Aries², the colerik hote signe.
 Ful lusty was the weder and benigne,
 For which the foules, agayn³ the sonne shene,
 What for the seson and the yonge grene,
 Ful loude songen hir affecciouns;
 Hem semed han geten hem protecciouns
 Agayn⁴ the swerd of winter kene and cold.

50

This Cambinskan, of which I have yow told,
 In royal vestiment sit on his deys⁵,
 With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys,
 And halt his feste, so solempne and so riche
 That in this world ne was ther noon it liche.
 Of which if I shal tellen al th'array,
 Than wolde it occupye a someres day;
 And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse
 At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.
 I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes⁶,
 Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes⁷.
 Eek in that lond, as tellen knightes olde,
 Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee holde,
 That in this lond men recche⁸ of it but smal;
 Ther nis no man that may reporten al.
 I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme⁹,
 And for it is no fruit but los of tyme;
 Un-to my firste I wol have my recours.

60

70

And so bifel that, after the thridde cours,

¹ i.e. the fifteenth. ² 'The Ram' (see note on Prologue, l. 8).
 It was the 'Mansion', in astrology, of the planet Mars. ³ 'In
 return for'. ⁴ 'Against'. ⁵ 'Dais'. ⁶ 'Gravies'.
⁷ 'Hernshaw' (young heron). ⁸ 'Reck'. ⁹ i.e. 9 o'clock
 in the morning.

Why! that this king sit thus in his nobleye¹,
 Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges pleye
 Biforn him at the bord deliciously,
 In at the halle-door al sodeynly
 Ther cam a knight up-on a stede of bras,
 And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.
 Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,
 And by his syde a naked swerd hanging;
 And up he rydeth to the heighe bord.
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word
 For merveille of this knight; him to biholde
 Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.

80

This strange knight, that cam thus sodeynly,
 Al armed save his heed ful richely,
 Salueth king and queen, and lordes all,
 By ordre, as they seten in the halle,
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce
 As wel in speche as in contenaunce,
 That Gawain, with his olde curteisye,
 Though he were come ageyn out of Fairye,
 Ne coude him nat amende² with a word.
 And after this, biforn the heighe bord,
 He with a manly voys seith his message,
 After the forme used in his langage,
 With-oute vyce of sillable or of lettre;
 And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere³,
 As techeth art of speche hem that it lere⁴;
 Al-be-it that I can nat sounne his style,
 Ne can nat climben over so heigh a style,
 Yet seye I this, as to commune entente⁵,
 Thus muche amounteth al that ever he mente,

90

100

¹ 'State'. ² 'Surpass'. ³ 'Countenance'. ⁴ 'Learn'.
⁵ 'In plain language'.

If it so be that I have it in minde.

He seyde, 'the king of Arabie and of Inde, 110

My lige lord, on this solempne day

Salueth yow as he best can and may,

And sendeth yow, in honour of your feste,

By me, that am al redy at your heste¹,

This stede of bras, that esily and wel

Can, in the space of o day naturel,

This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,

Wher-so yow list, in droghte or elles shoures,

Beren your body in-to every place

To which your herte wilneth for to pace 120

With-outen wem² of yow, thurgh foul or fair ;

Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air

As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,

This same stede shal bere yow ever-more

With-outen harm, til ye be ther yow leste,

Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste ;

And turne ayeyn, with wrything³ of a pin.

He that it wroghte coude ful many a gin⁴ ;

He wayted⁵ many a constellacioun

Er he had doon this operacioun ; 130

And knew ful many a seel and many a bond.

This mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,

Hath swich a might, that men may in it see

Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee

Un-to your regne or to your-self also ;

And openly who is your freend or foo.

And over al this, if any lady bright

Hath set hir herte on any maner wight,

If he be fals, she shal his treson see,

His newe love and al his subtiltee 140

¹ 'Command'. ² 'Hurt'. ³ 'Twisting'. ⁴ 'Con-
trivance' (perhaps shortened from 'engine'). ⁵ 'Watched'.

So openly, that ther shal no-thing hyde.
 Wherfor, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
 This mirour and this ring, that ye may see,
 He hath sent to my lady Canacee,
 Your excellente doghter that is here.

The vertu of the ring, if ye wol here,
 Is this; that, if hir lust it for to were
 Up-on hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,
 Ther is no foul that fleeth under the hevene
 That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene¹, 150
 And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,
 And answeere him in his langage ageyn.
 And every gras that groweth up-on rote
 She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do bote²,
 Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde.

This naked swerd, that hangeth by my syde,
 Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye smyte,
 Thurgh-out his armure it wol kerve and byte,
 Were it as thikke as is a branched ook³;
 And what man that is wounded with the strook 160
 Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,
 To stroke him with the platte⁴ in thilke place
 Ther he is hurt: this is as muche to seyn
 Ye mote with the platte swerd ageyn
 Stroke him in the wounde, and it wol close;
 This is a verray sooth, with-outen glose⁵,
 It failleth nat whyl it is in your hold.'

And whan this knight hath thus his tale told,
 He rydeth out of halle, and doun he lighte.
 His stede, which that shoon as sonne brighte, 170
 Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.
 This knight is to his chambre lad anon,

¹ 'Voice' (O.E. *stefen*).

² 'Remedy' (cf. *Sir Cleges*, l. 271). ³ 'Oak'.

⁴ 'Flat of the blade'.

⁵ Literally 'without commentary'.

And is unarmed and to mete y-set.

The presents been ful royally y-fet¹,
 This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,
 And born anon in-to the heighe tour
 With certeine officers ordeyned therfore ;
 And un-to Canacee this ring was bore
 Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.
 But sikerly, with-outen any fable, 180
 The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed²,
 It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed.
 Ther may no man out of the place it dryve
 For noon engyn of windas or polyve³ ;
 And cause why, for they can nat the craft.
 And therefore in the place they han it laft
 Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
 To voyden⁴ him, as ye shal after here.

Greet was the prees⁵, that swarmeth to and fro,
 To gauren⁶ on this hors that stondeh so ; 190
 For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
 So wel proporcioned for to ben strong,
 Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye ;
 Ther-with so horsly⁷, and so quik of yē
 As it a gentil Poileys⁸ courser were.
 For certes, fro his tayl un-to his ere,
 Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende
 In no degree, as al the peple wende⁹.
 But evermore hir moste wonder was,
 How that it coude goon, and was of bras ; 200
 It was of Fairye, as the peple semed.
 Diverse folk diversely they demed ;

¹ 'Brought in'. ² 'Removed'. ³ 'Windlass or pulley'.
⁴ 'Get rid of'. ⁵ 'Crowd'. ⁶ 'Gaze'. ⁷ On the analogy
of 'manly'. ⁸ Apulia (in South Italy) was famous for horses.
⁹ 'Knew'.

As many hedes, as many wittes ther been.
 They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,
 And maden skiles¹ after hir fantasyes,
 Rehersinge of thise olde poetryes,
 And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,
 The hors that hadde winges for to flee;
 Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon²,
 That broghte Troye to destruccion, 210
 As men may in thise olde gestes³ rede.
 'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is evermore in drede;
 I trowe som men of armes been ther-inne,
 That shapen hem this citee for to winne.
 It were right good that al swich thing were knowe.'
 Another rowned⁴ to his felawe lowe,
 And seyde, 'he lyeth, it is rather lyk
 An apparence y-maad by som magyk,
 As jogelours pleyen at thise festes grete.'
 Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete, 220
 As lewed⁵ peple demeth comunly
 Of thinges that ben maad more subtilly
 Than they can in her lewednes comprehende;
 They demen gladly to the badder ende⁶.
 And somme of hem wondred on the mirour,
 That born was up in-to the maister-tour,
 How men mighte in it swiche thinges see.
 Another answerde, and seyde it mighte wel be
 Naturelly, by composiciouns
 Of angles and of slye reflexiouns, 230
 And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.
 They spoken of Alocen⁷ and Vitulon⁸,

¹ 'Reasons'. ² 'The horse of Sinon the Greek'. (See Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 195.) ³ 'Stories'. ⁴ 'Whispered' (see above, p. 29, note 3). ⁵ 'Ignorant' (see Prologue, l. 289). ⁶ i.e. 'gladly put the worse interpretation on them'. ⁷ 'Alhazen', an Arabian optician, c. 1100. ⁸ 'Vitello', a Polish mathematician, c. 1270.

And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves
Of queynte mirours and of prospectyves,
As knowen they that han hir bokes herd.

And othere folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde percen thurgh-out every-thing;
And fille in speche of Thelophus¹ the king,
And of Achilles with his queynte spere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere², 240
Right in swich wyse as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye han your-selven herd.
They speken of sondry harding of metal,
And speke of medicynes ther-with-al,
And how, and whanne, it sholde y-harded be;
Which is unknowe agates unto me.

Tho speke they of Canaceës ring,
And seyden alle, that swich a wonder thing
Of craft of ringes herde they never non,
Save that he, Moyses, and king Salomon 250
Hadde a name of konning in swich art.
Thus seyn the peple, and drawen hem apart.
But nathelees, somme seyden that it was
Wonder to maken of fern-asshen³ glas,
And yet nis glas nat lyk asshen of fern;
But for they han y-knowen it so fern⁴,
Therefore cesseth her jangling and her wonder.
As sore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on mist,
And alle thing, til that the cause is wist. 260
Thus jangle they and demen and devyse,
Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse.

¹ Telephus, king of Mysia, was healed by the rust of the sword which wounded him (Ovid, *Tristia*, v. ii. 15). ² 'Injure' (cf. *Sir Cleges*, l. 34). ³ 'Fern-ashes', then used in making glass. ⁴ 'Long'.

Phebus hath laft the angle meridional¹,
 And yet ascending was the beest royal,
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran²,
 Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambinskan,
 Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hye.
 Toform him gooth the loude minstralceye,
 Til he cam to his chambre of parements³,
 Ther as they sownen diverse instruments, 270
 That it is lyk an heven for to here.
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,
 For in the Fish⁴ hir lady sat ful hye,
 And loketh on hem with a freendly yë.

This noble king is set up in his trone.
 This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,
 And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
 Heer is the revel and the jolitee
 That is nat able a dul man to devyse.
 He moste han knowen love and his servyse, 280
 And been a festlich man as fresh as May,
 That sholde yow devysen swich array.

Who coude telle yow the forme of daunces,
 So uncouth⁵ and so fresshe contenaunces,
 Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges
 For drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvinges?
 No man but Launcelot⁶, and he is deed.
 Therefor I passe of al this lustiheed;
 I seye na-more, but in this jolynesse
 I lete⁷ hem, til men to the soper dresse. 290

The styward bit⁸ the spyces for to hye⁹,
 And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.

¹ 'Southern'. ² A star in the constellation Leo. ³ 'State'.
⁴ The sign 'Pisces' was supposed, in astrology, to be favourable to the planet Venus. ⁵ 'Strange' (lit. 'unknown'). ⁶ The most famous of King Arthur's knights. ⁷ 'Leave'. ⁸ 'Bade'.
⁹ 'Hasten'.

The usshers and the squyers ben y-goön ;
 The spyces and the wyn is come anoon.
 They ete and drinke ; and whan this hadde an ende,
 Un-to the temple, as reson was, they wende.

The service doon, they soupen al by day.
 What nedeth yow rehercen hir array ?
 Ech man wot wel, that at a kinges feeste
 Hath plentee, to the moste and to the leeste, 300
 And deyntees mo than been in my knowing.
 At-after soper gooth this noble king
 To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
 Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.

Swich wondring was ther on this hors of bras
 That, sin the grete sege of Troye was,
 Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,
 Ne was ther swich a wondring as was tho.
 But fynally the king axeth this knight
 The vertu of this courser and the might, 310
 And preyede him to telle his governaunce¹.

This hors anoon bigan to trippe and daunce,
 Whan that this knight leyde hand up-on his reyne,
 And seyde, 'sir, ther is na-more to seyne,
 But, whan yow list to ryden any-where,
 Ye moten trille² a pin, stant in his ere,
 Which I shall telle yow bitwix us two.
 Ye mote nempne³ him to what place also
 Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.
 And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde, 320
 Bidde him descende, and trille another pin,
 For ther-in lyth the effect of al the gin,
 And he wol down descende and doon your wille
 And in that place he wol abyde stille,

¹ i.e. how to control it.² 'Turn' (cf. l. 127).³ 'Name'.

Though al the world the contrarie hadde y-swore ;
 He shal nat thennes ben y-drawe n'y-bore.
 Or, if yow liste bidde him thennes goon,
 Trille this pin, and he wol vanishe anoon
 Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
 And come agayn, be it by day or night, 330
 When that yow list to clepen him ageyn
 In swich a gyse¹ as I shal to yow seyn
 Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful sone.
 Ryde whan yow list, ther is na-more to done.'

Enformed whan the king was of that knight,
 And hath conceyved in his wit aright
 The maner and the forme of al this thing,
 Thus glad and blythe, this noble doughty king
 Repeireth to his revel as biforn.

The brydel is un-to the tour y-born, 340
 And kept among his jewels leve and dere.
 The hors vanissed, I noot² in what manere,
 Out of hir sighte ; ye gete na-more of me.
 But thus I lete in lust and Iolitee
 This Cambynskan his lordes festeyinge,
 Til wel ny the day bigan to springe.

EXPLICIT PRIMA PARS.

SEQUITUR PARS SECUNDA

The norice of digestioun, the slepe,
 Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe³,
 That muchel drink and labour wolde han reste ;
 And with a galping mouth hem alle he keste⁴, 350
 And seyde, 'it was tyme to lye adoun,
 For blood was in his dominacioun⁵ ;

¹ 'Manner'.

² 'Ne-wot', i. e. know not.

³ 'Heed'.

⁴ 'Kissed'.

⁵ The pulse was supposed to be strongest six hours after midnight.

Cherissheth blood, natures freend,¹ quod he.
 They thanken him galpinge, by two, by three,
 And every wight gan drawe him to his reste,
 As slepe hem bad ; they toke it for the beste.
 Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me ;
 Ful were hir hedes of fumositee²,
 That causeth dreem, of which ther nis no charge³.
 They slepen til that it was pryme large⁴, 360
 The moste part, but it⁵ were Canace
 She was ful mesurable⁶, as wommen be.
 For of hir fader hadde she take leve
 To gon to reste, sone after it was eve ;
 Hir liste nat appalled⁷ for to be,
 Nor on the morwe unfestlich for to see ;
 And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne awook.
 For swich a joye she in hir herte took
 Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,
 That twenty tyme she changed hir colour ; 370
 And in hir slepe, right for impressioun
 Of hir mirour, she hadde a visioun.
 Wherefore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,
 She cleped on hir maistresse⁸ hir bisyde,
 And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse.

Thise olde wommen that been gladly wyse,
 As is hir maistresse⁸, answerde hir anoon,
 And seyde, 'madame, whider wil ye goon
 Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste.'
 'I wol,' quod she, 'aryse, for me leste 380
 No longer for to slepe, and walke aboute.'

Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a gret route,

¹ i.e. the fumes of wine.

² 'Significance'.

³ 'Broad day'.

⁴ 'Except'.

⁵ 'Moderate'.

⁶ 'Pale'.

⁷ 'Governess'.

⁸ Inversion for 'Her governess, who, like all old women, would gladly seem wise'.

And up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve ;
 Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,
 As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne,
 That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne ;
 Noon hyer was he, whan she redy was ;
 And forth she walketh esily a pas,
 Arrayed after the lusty seson sote
 Lightly, for to pleye and walke on fote ; 390
 Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynee¹ ;
 And in a trench², forth in the park, goth she.
 The vapour, which that fro the erthe glood³,
 Made the sonne to seme rody and brood ;
 But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte
 That it made alle hir hertes for to lighte,
 What for the seson and the morweninge,
 And for the foules that she herde singe ;
 For right anon she wiste what they mente
 Right by hir song, and knew al hir entente. 400
 The knotte⁴, why that every tale is told,
 If it be taried til that lust be cold
 Of hem that han it after herkned yore,
 The savour passeth ever lenger the more,
 For fulsomnesse of his proluxitee.
 And by the same reson thinketh me,
 I sholde to the knotte condescende,
 And maken of hir walking sone an ende.
 Amidde a tree fordrye⁵, as whyt as chalk,
 As Canacee was pleying in hir walk, 410
 Ther sat a faucon over hir heed ful hye,
 That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
 That all the wode resounded of hir cry.
 Y-beten hath she hir-self so pitously

¹ 'Company'.² 'Alley'.³ 'Rose' (lit. 'glided').⁴ i. e. point of the story.⁵ 'Withered'.

With bothe hir winges, til the rede blood
 Ran endelong¹ the tree ther-as she stood.
 And ever in oon she cryde alwey and shrighthe²,
 And with hir beek hir-selven so she prighte³,
 That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel beste,
 That dwelleth either in wode or in foreste 420
 That nolde han wept, if that he wepe coude,
 For sorwe of hir, she shrighthe alwey so loude.
 For ther nas never yet no man on lyve—
 If that I coude a faucon wel discryve—
 That herde of swich another of fairnesse,
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse
 Of shap, and al that mighte y-rekened be.
 A faucon peregryn⁴ than semed she
 Of fremde⁵ land; and evermore, as she stood,
 She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood, 430
 Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.

This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,
 That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,
 Thurgh which she understood wel every thing
 That any foul may in his ledene⁶ seyn,
 And coude answer him in his ledene ageyn,
 Hath understonde what this faucon seyde,
 And wel neigh for the rewthe⁷ almost she deyde.
 And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,
 And on this faucon loketh pitously, 440
 And heeld hir lappe abrood, for wel she wiste
 The faucon moste fallen fro the twiste⁸,
 When that it swowned next, for lakke of blood.
 Alonge while to wayten hir she stood

¹ 'All down'. ² 'Shrieked'. ³ 'Tore'. ⁴ The peregrine, or 'travelling' falcon, is so called from the difficulty of finding its nest. ⁵ 'Foreign'. ⁶ 'Language' (lit. 'Latin').
⁷ 'Pity' (cf. 'ruthless'). ⁸ 'Branch'.

Till atte laste she spak in this manere
Un-to the hauk, as ye shul after here.

'What is the cause, if it be for to telle,
That ye be in this furial¹ pyne of helle?'

Quod Canacee un-to this hauk above.

'Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of love?'

450

For, as I trowe, thise ben causes two

That causen moost a gentil herte wo ;

Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke.

For ye your-self upon your-self yow wreke,

Which proveth wel, that either love or drede

Mot been encheson² of your cruel dede,

Sin that I see non other wight yow chace.

For love of God, as dooth your-selven grace

Or what may ben your help ; for west nor eest

460

Ne sey I never er now no brid ne beest

That ferde with him-self³ so pitously.

Ye slee me with your sorwe, verrailly ;

I have of yow so gret compassioun.

For Goddes love, com fro the tree adoun ;

And, as I am a kinges doghter trewe,

If that I verrailly the cause knewe

Of your disese⁴, if it lay in my might,

I wolde amende it, er that it were night,

As wisly⁵ helpe me gret God of kinde⁶ !

And herbes shal I right y-nowe y-finde

470

To hele with your hurtes hastily.'

Tho shrighthe this faucon more pitously

Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde amoon,

And lyth aswowne, deed, and lyk a stoon,

Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take

Un-to the tyme she gan of swough⁷ awake.

¹ 'Tormenting'. ² 'Occasion'. ³ 'Used himself'. ⁴ 'Trouble'
(cf. *Sir Ileges*, l. 140). ⁵ 'Truly'. ⁶ 'Nature'. ⁷ 'Swoon'.

And, after that she of hir swough gan breyde¹,
 Right in hir haukes ledene thus she seyde:—
 'That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte,
 Feling his similitude in peynes smerte,
 Is preved al-day², as men may it see,
 As wel by werk as by auctoritee;
 For gentil herte kytheth³ gentillesse.
 I see wel, that ye han of my distresse
 Compassioun, my faire Canacee,
 Of verray wommanly benignitee
 That nature in your principles hath set.
 But for non hope for to fare the bet⁴,
 But for to obeye un-to your herte free,
 And for to maken other be war⁵ by me,
 As by the whelp chasted is the leoun⁶,
 Right for that cause and that conclusioun,
 Whyl that I have a leyser⁷ and a space,
 Myn harm I wol confessen, er I pace⁸.
 And ever, whyl that oon hir sorwe tolde,
 That other weep, as she to water wolde,
 Til that the faucon bad hir to be stille;
 And, with a syk⁹, right thus she seyde hir wille.

480

490

'Ther I was bred (allas! that harde day!)
 And fostred in a roche¹⁰ of marbul gray
 So tendrely, that nothing eyled¹¹ me,
 I niste nat what was adversitee,
 Til I coude flee ful hye under the sky.
 Tho dwelte a tercelet¹² me faste by,

500

¹ 'Start'.² 'Always'.³ 'Makes known' (akin to 'couthe').⁴ 'Better'.⁵ 'To take warning'.⁶ Referring to the proverb, *Battre le chien devant le lion*. See *Othello*,
 II. iii. 272.⁷ 'Leisure'.⁸ 'Pass'.⁹ 'Sigh'.¹⁰ 'Rock'.¹¹ 'Ailed'.¹² 'Male hawk' (so called because usually one-
 third smaller than the female. *Cotgrave*).

That semed welles¹ of alle gentillesse ;
 Al² were he ful of treson and falsnesse,
 It was so wrapped under humble chere,
 And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,
 Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,
 That no wight coude han wend he coude feyne, 510
 So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures.
 Right as a serpent hit³ him under floures
 Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,
 Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,
 Doth so his cerimonies and obeisaunces,
 And kepeth in semblant⁴ alle his observances
 That sowneth⁵ in-to gentillesse of love.
 As in a tounbe is al the faire above,
 And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,
 Swich was this ypocryte, bothe cold and hoot, 520
 And in this wyse he served his entente,
 That (save the feend) non wiste what he mente.
 Til he so longe had wopen and compleyned,
 And many a yeer his service to me feyned,
 Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce⁶,
 Al innocent of his crowned malice,
 For-fered⁷ of his deeth, as thoughte me,
 Upon his othes and his seuretee,
 Graunted him love, on this condicioun,
 That evermore myn honour and renoun 530
 Were saved, bothe privee and apert⁸ ;
 This is to seyn, that, after his desert,
 I yaf him al myn herte and al my thought—
 God woot and he, that otherwyse noght—

¹ 'Source'.² 'Although'.³ 'Hides'.⁴ 'Appearance'.⁵ See Prologue, l. 230.⁶ 'Too weak'.⁷ 'Afraid'.⁸ 'Openly'.

And took his herte in chaunge for myn for ay.
But sooth is seyð, gon sithen many a day,
"A trew wight and a theef thenken nat oon."

And, whan he saugh the thing so fer y-goön,
That I had graunted him fully my love,

In swich a gyse as I have seyð above,

540

And yeven him my trewe herte, as free

As he swoor he his herte yaf to me ;

Anon this tygre, ful of doublesnesse,

Fil on his knees with so devout humblesse,

With so heigh reverence, and, as by his chere,

So lyk a gentil lovers of manere,

So ravissshed, as it semed, for the joye,

That never Jason, ne Parys of Troye,

Jason ? certes, ne non other man,

Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan

550

To loven two, as writen folk biforn,

Ne never, sin the firste man was born,

Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,

Countrefete the sophimes¹ of his art ;

Ne were worthy unbokete his galoche²,

Ther doublesnesse or feyning sholde approche,

Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me !

His maner was an heven for to see

Til any womman, were she never so wys ;

So peynted he and kembde³ at point-devys⁴

560

As wel his wordes as his contenaunce.

And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,

And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,

That, if so were that any thing him smerte,

Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste,

Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte twiste.

¹ 'False subtleties'. ² 'Shoe'. ³ 'Smoothed' (lit. 'combed').

⁴ 'Trimly'.

And shortly, so ferforth¹ this thing is went,
 That my wil was his willes instrument ;
 This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil
 In alle thing, as fer as reson fil²,
 Keping the boundes of my worship ever.
 Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,
 As him, God woot ! ne never shal na-mo.

570

This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,
 That I supposed of him noght but good.
 But fynally, thus atte laste it stood,
 That fortune wolde that he moste twinne³
 Out of that place which that I was inne.
 Wher me was wo, that is no questioun ;
 I can nat make of it discripcioun ;
 For o thing dar I tellen boldely,
 I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther-by ;
 Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bileve.
 So on a day of me he took his leve,
 So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly
 That he had felt as muche harm as I,
 Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh his hewe.
 But nathelees, I thoughte he was so trewe,
 And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn
 With-inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyn ;
 And reson wolde eek that he moste go
 For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,
 That I made vertu of necessitee,
 And took it wel, sin that it moste be.
 As I best mighte, I hidde fro him my sorwe,
 And took him by the hond, seint John to borwe⁴,

580

590

¹ 'Far'.² 'Lay' (lit. 'fell').³ 'Depart' (O.E. *twā*, 'two', hence 'twine' for 'separate').⁴ i.e. 'St. John being my pledge'; a common phrase in swearing troth.

And seyde him thus: "lo, I am youres al;
Beth swich as I to yow have been, and shal."
What he answerde, it nedeth noght reherce,
Who can sey bet than he, who can do werse? 600
Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath he doon.
"Therfor bihoveth him a ful long spoon
That shal ete with a feend," thus herde I seye.
So atte laste he moste forth his weye,
And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him leste.
Whan it cam him to purpos for to reste,
I trowe he hadde thilke text in minde,
That "alle thing, repering to his kinde,
Gladeth¹ him-self"; thus seyn men, as I gesse;
Men loven of propre kinde² newfangelnesse, 610
As briddes doon that men in cages fede.
For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,
And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe,
He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
And to the wode he wol and wormes ete;
So newefangel been they of hir mete,
And loven novelryes of propre kinde;
No gentillesse of blood [ne] may hem binde. 620
So ferde this tercelet, alas the day!
Though he were gentil born, and fresh and gay,
And goodly for to seen, and humble and free,
He saugh up-on a tyme a kyte³ flee,
And sodeynly he loved this kyte so,
That al his love is clene fro me ago,
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse;
Thus hath the kyte my love in hir servyse,

¹ 'Rejoiceth'.² 'Of their own nature'.³ The kite was

often used as the emblem of baseness.

And I am lorn with-outen remedye!'
 And with that word this faucon gan to crye, 630
 And swowned eft in Canaceës barme¹.

Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes harme,
 That Canacee and alle hir wommen made;
 They niste² how they mighte the faucon glade.
 But Canacee hom bereth hir in hir lappe,
 And softly in plastres gan hir wrappe,
 Ther as she with hir beek had hurt hir-selve.
 Now can nat Canacee but herbes delve
 Out of the grounde, and make salves newe
 Of herbes precious, and fyne of hewe, 640
 To helen with³ this hauk; fro day to night
 She dooth hir bisinesse and al hir might.
 And by hir beddes heed she made a mewe⁴,
 And covered it with veluëttes⁵ blewe,
 In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene.
 And al with-oute, the mewe is peynted grene,
 In which were peynted alle thise false foules,
 As beth thise tidifs⁶, terceletts, and oules,
 Right for despyt were peynted hem bisyde,
 And pyes⁷, on hem for to crye and chyde. 650

Thus lete I Canacee hir hauk keping;
 I wol na-more as now speke of hir ring,
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
 How that this faucon gat hir love ageyn
 Repentant, as the storie telleth us,
 By mediacioun of Cambalus,
 The kinges sone, of whiche I yow tolde.
 But hennes-forth I wol my proces holde

¹ 'Bosom'. ² 'Ne-wiste' (i.e. 'knew not').

³ i.e. 'with which to heal'. ⁴ 'Cage'.

⁵ 'Velvets'.

⁶ Perhaps 'titmouse'.

⁷ 'Magpies'.

To speke of adventures and of batailles,
That never yet was herd so grete mervailles. 660

First wol I telle yow of Cambinskan,
That in his tyme many a citee wan ;
And after wol I speke of Algarsyf,
How that he wan Theodora to his wyf,
For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was,
Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of bras ;
And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
That faught in listes with the bretheren two
For Canacee, er that he mighte hir winne.
And ther I lefte I wol ageyn biginne. 670

EXPLICIT SECUNDA PARS. INCIPIT PARS TERCIA

Appollo whirleth up his char so hye,
Til that the god Mercurius hous the slye¹—

HERE FOLWEN THE WORDES OF THE FRANKELIN TO THE SQUIER,

AND THE WORDES OF THE HOST TO THE FRANKELIN

'In feith, Squier, thou hast thee wel y-quit,
And gentilly I preise wel thy wit,'
Quod the Frankeleyn, 'considering thy youthe,
So feelingly thou spekest, sir, I allow the !
As to my doom², there is non that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,
If that thou live ; God yeve thee good chaunce,
And in vertu sende thee continuaunce ! 680
For of thy speche I have greet deyntee³.
I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee,
I hadde lever than twenty pound worth lond,
Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,

¹ i.e. 'Until (he comes) to the house of the sly god Mercury'.
The sentence is interrupted by the Franklin. ² 'Judgement'.

³ 'Pleasure'.

He were a man of swich discrecioun
 As that ye been ! fy on possessioun
 But-if a man be vertuuous with-al.
 I have my sone snibbed¹, and yet shal,
 For he to vertu listeth nat entende ;
 But for to pleye at dees², and to despende,
 And lese al that he hath, is his usage.
 And he hath lever talken with a page
 Than to comune with any gentil wight
 Ther he mighte lerne gentillesse aright.'

690

'Straw for your gentillesse,' quod our host ;
 'What, frankeleyn ? pardee, sir, wel thou wost
 That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste
 A tale or two, or breken his biheste³.'

'That knowe I wel, sir,' quod the frankeleyn ;
 'I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn
 Though to this man I speke a word or two.'

700

'Telle on thy tale with-uten wordes mo.'
 'Gladly, sir host,' quod he, 'I wol obeye
 Un-to your wil ; now herkneth what I seye.
 I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse
 As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse ;
 I prey to God that it may plesen yow,
 Than woot I wel that it is good y-now.'

¹ See Prologue, l. 310.² 'Dice'.³ 'Break his promise'.

CHAPTER VI

GOWER, LYDGATE, AND OCCLEVE

IF we wish to measure the height of Chaucer, we have but to set him beside the greatest of his contemporaries and disciples. Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve were men of considerable talent, of sound moral purpose, of wide learning and cultivated skill. Yet their work has passed into almost entire disregard, and their very names are seldom recalled, unless by some malicious historian barbing an epigram against the century in which they lived. One reason, no doubt, was their portentous fluency. Gower alone wrote over twice as many verses as Homer and Virgil together; Lydgate was almost equally voluminous; Occleve, though of a somewhat more merciful restraint, lacked opportunity rather than eloquence. To read these men through is an almost impossible task, a penance even beyond the scope of the Pisan magistrate who, in Macaulay's apologue, offered his criminal a choice between Guicciardini and the galleys. Yet it may be that, like the historian of the Florentine Wars, they have been unduly depreciated. It is beyond denial that much of their writing is uninspired; but here and there are passages of a more human interest than can be attained by mere facility and erudition. The prologue to the *Confessio Amantis* is true and spontaneous: the *London Lackpenny* is a picturesque transcript of London street-life; the queer fable of *Horse, Goose and Sheep* exhibits, at any rate, some power of stating a case; Occleve's lines on Chaucer are marked by real pathos and dignity. Their speech, as the proverb has it, was only silvern,

but our literature would have been the poorer for their silence.

At the time in which they wrote there was a growing interest in ethical questions. The Morality plays were familiarizing men with the allegorical representations of virtue and vice; in 1330 appeared De Guilleville's *Pilgrimage of Human Life*, ten years later followed Hampole's *Prick of Conscience*; and so the roll spread on through *Pearl*, and *Cleanness and Patience* (probably by the author of *Sir Gawayn* — itself a story with a moral) to the satire of Langland and the apostolic zeal of Wyclif. The coming Reformation cast its shadow before. Lydgate and Occleve were in full manhood when the Lollards arose; they may have heard the royal proclamation against heresy, and seen the martyrdom of Sawtree and Oldcastle. On every hand there were pressing the problems of life and conduct, of faith and reason, of liberty and obedience, of the destiny of man and the vicissitudes of human life. It is little wonder that men should appear who, without the incentive of genius, set themselves to express as they could the current ideas and the current questions.

Hence it is that the poetry of Occleve, of Lydgate, and above all of 'the moral Gower', is in the main ethical, or political, or religious. It is not of great moment, but it is worth mentioning, that all three lived under the immediate protection of the Church. Gower was for many years lay-rector of a living in Essex; Lydgate was a monastic schoolmaster; Occleve ended his days in a Hampshire Priory; and though by the custom of the time such offices were often lightly bestowed and irresponsibly accepted, it is probable that in these instances they were not without effect. At any rate the vicarage garden and the monastery close are fitting seed-beds for work which, with all its faults, was always directed to the cause of virtue. The teaching of the mediaeval clergy was often at variance with their

life: but it is with the teaching and not the life that we are here concerned.

The fatal defect of Gower is his want of sympathy. He is so desperately in earnest that he loses all sense of proportion; he elaborates trivial details, he hammers on cold iron, he often endangers his moral by his failure to see that it may have more than one aspect. No more remarkable illustration of Humility has ever been given than that put forward, in all good faith, by the story here quoted. The knight's daughter, who stands for that virtue, answers her three questions with demure and becoming modesty: the king, in love with her wit, regrets that he cannot marry her as she is not of noble rank, and bids her choose instead a reward suitable to her condition; she asks an earldom for her father, and, when that is granted, points out that the only obstacle to the marriage is now removed. Did ever woman in this humour woo? The situation is wholly unforeseen, the comedy wholly unconscious, and the one person left with a grave face is the serious and didactic author.

Lydgate has some genuine descriptive power, but he was oppressed by the multitude of his undertakings, and his style, except in some lighter numbers, is curiously rough and unpolished. He seems to have been a facile and industrious man who wrote to order—the life of a Saint for his monastery, a political treatise for the king, endless translations which turned prose into verse and often left it very like prose in the end. There is a good deal of sound sense in his writing, but there is very little music, and almost none of the spontaneous fire which is the only element of true poetry. For the most part he is but a planet in the solar system of Chaucer; shining by light reflected on a surface frigid and opaque.

Of the three, Occleve is the most shadowy figure.

We owe him our gratitude for Chaucer's portrait, and for a score of memorial stanzas which have the true elegiac ring; but the rest of his work is of little account: a fainter echo of the strains that died with the close of the fourteenth century. His *Gouvernail of Princes* is, in the main, a dreary performance; its subject unsuited for poetry, its treatment usually wooden and constrained. The lines here given represent him at his best; and, though admired by some of our Jacobean poets, he remains but a *nominis umbra* at the present day.

It may be noted that the chief men of letters, at this time, were trilingual. Gower wrote in French, Latin, and English with equal ease; the author of the *Canterbury Tales* made translations from Boethius and from Jean de Meung; their two younger contemporaries fell little behind them in erudition. French was still the language of romance; Latin, through Church influence, was the common heritage of educated men; and against their competing claims our national speech was but slowly asserting its right of place.

JOHN GOWER (1330?-1408), the contemporary and friend of Chaucer, was a native of Kent. His first works were written in French:—a collection of fifty *Balades*, after the Provençal form, and a didactic poem in ten books called the *Speculum Meditantis*¹. Both these were in all probability written before the death of Edward III (1377). About 1382-3 he began *Vox Clamantis* (seven books of Latin Elegiacs), in which he deplored the miseries that had led to the rebellion of Wat Tyler, and severely censured the injustice of lawyers and the corruption of the clergy. In 1390 he was appointed by the Crown to the Rectory of Great Braxted in Essex, where he had property,

¹ This is the name by which it is usually known to historians. But Gower's first title for it was *Speculum Hominis* or *Mirour de l'Omme*. It was a poem of over 30,000 lines, most of which is preserved in Mr. Macaulay's edition. There is no doubt that Gower made great use of it in his *Confessio Amantis*.

and held it as Clerk, or Lay Rector, until 1396. During his tenure of this benefice he wrote, in 1393, at the command of Richard II, the *Confessio Amantis*, which is the most famous of his poems. It is written in English, and consists of a Prologue and eight books, seven containing moral stories on the seven deadly sins, and one (interpolated as seventh in the series) giving a rhymed digest of the political treatise called *Secreta Secretorum*, which, falsely ascribed to Aristotle, was very popular at the time (see Lydgate and Occleve). In 1396, disgusted at the king's treachery towards Gloucester, he resigned his living and retired to the Priory of St. Mary's, Southwark, to the rebuilding of which he liberally contributed. There, about 1400, he wrote his last work, the *Cronica Tripartita*, which describes in Latin leonine hexameters the story of Richard II's fall and deposition. In 1400, the year of Chaucer's death, he became blind. His effigy, in St. Mary's, Southwark, bears the Lancastrian collar of SS, with the badge of the Swan, bestowed on him, as a recognition of his merits, by Henry IV.

THE TALE OF THE THREE QUESTIONS

(From the *Confessio Amantis*)

A KING whilom was yong and wys,
 The which sette of his wit gret pris.
 Of depe ymaginaciouns
 And strange interpretaciouns,
 Problems and demandes eke,
 His wisdom was to finde and seke ;
 Wherof he wolde in sondri wise
 Opposen hem that weren wise.
 Bot non of hem it myhte bere
 Upon his word to yeve answer,
 Outaken on, which was a knyht ;
 To him was every thing so liht,
 That also sone as he hem herde,
 The kinges wordes he answerde.

The king, angered because he is unable 'the knyhtes wittes to confounde', determines to ask him a riddle which he shall not be able to answer. After spending some time in deep thought, he sends for the knight, and asks him three questions.

The ferste point of alle thre
 Was this: 'What thing in his degre
 Of al this world hath nede lest,
 And yet men helpe it althermost?'
 The secounde is: 'What most is worth,
 And of costage is lest put forth?' 20
 The thridde is: 'Which is of most cost,
 And lest is worth and goth to lost?'
 The king thes thre demandes axeth,
 And to the knyht this lawe he taxeth,
 That he schal gon and come ayein
 The thridde weke, and telle him plein
 To every point, what it amounteth;
 And if so be that he misconteth
 To make in his answare a faile
 Ther schal non other thing availe, 30
 The king seith, bot he schal be ded
 And lese hise goodes and his hed.
 The knyht was sori of this thing,
 And wolde excuse him to the king,
 Bot he ne wolde him noght forbere,
 And thus the knyht of his answare
 Goth home to take avisement.

The more he thinks over the questions, the more downcast he becomes.

He thoghte ferste upon his lif,
 And after that upon his wif,
 Upon his children ek also, 40
 Of whiche he hadde dowhtres two.

As he walks in the garden, one day, lamenting his hard fate,
his younger daughter comes to him.

Upon hire knes sche gan doun falle
With humble herte and to him calle,
And seide: 'O goode fader diere,
Why make ye thus hevy chiere,
And I wot nothing how it is?
And wel ye knowen, fader, this,
What aventure that you felle
Ye myhte it sauffy to me telle,
For I have ofte herd you seid 50
That ye such trust have on me leid,
That to my soster ne my brother,
In al this world ne to non other,
Ye dorste telle a privite
So wel, my fader, as to me.'

The knight tells her of the king's command, and adds that
since only three days are left him, in which to solve the riddles,
his hope of life is but small, for he can 'answer unto no point'.
His daughter replies:

'My fader, sithen it is so,
That ye can se non other weie
Bot that ye moste nedes deie,
I wolde preie of you a thing:
Let me go with you to the king, 60
And ye schull make him understonde
How ye, my wittes forto fonde¹,
Have leid your answeere upon me.

For ofte schal a womman have
Thing which a man mai nocht areche.'

¹ 'Test': Old English *сандian*, to explore.

The knight agrees; and on the appointed day he and his daughter go to the Court. The courtiers are amazed when he begs that 'so yong a wyht' may answer for him.

Bot ate laste natheles
 The king comandeth ben in pes¹,
 And to this Maide he caste his chiere,
 And seide he wolde hire tale hierē,
 He bad hire speke, and sche began : 70

'The ferste I understonde is this,
 What thing of al the world it is
 Which men most helpe and hath lest nede.
 Mi liege lord, this wolde I rede :
 The Erthe it is, which evermo
 With mannes labour is bego²;
 Als wel in wynter as in Maii
 The mannes hond doth what he mai
 To helpe it forth and make it riche,
 And forthi men it delve and dyche 80
 And eren³ it with strengthe of plowh,
 Wher it hath of himself ynowh,
 So that his nede is ate leste.
 For every man and bridd and beste,
 And flour and gras and rote and rinde,
 And every thing be weie of kynde⁴
 Schal sterve⁵, and Erthe it schal become ;
 As it was out of Erthe nome⁶,
 It schal to therthe torne ayein :
 And thus I mai be resoun sein 90
 That Erthe is the most nedeles,

¹ i. e. peace.

² 'Labour' or 'cultivate': Old English *begangan*.

³ From Old English *erian*, to plough.

⁴ 'In course of nature'. ⁵ 'Die'.

⁶ 'Taken': Old English *niman*, to take.

And most men helpe it natheles.
 So that, my lord, touchende of this
 I have answerd hou that it is.
 That other point I understod,
 Which most is worth and most is good,
 And costeth lest a man to kepe:
 Mi lord, if ye woll take kepe,
 I seie it is Humilitie,
 Thurgh which the hihe Trinite 100
 As for decerte of pure love
 Unto Marie from above,
 Of that he knew hire humble entente
 His oghne Sone adown he sente,
 Above alle othre and hire he ches
 For that vertu which bodeth¹ pes:
 So that I may be resoun calle
 Humilite most worth of alle.
 And leste it costeth to maintiene
 In al the world as it is sene ; 110
 For who that hath humblesce on honde,
 He bringth no werres into londe,
 For he desireth for the beste
 To setten every man in reste.
 Thus with your hihe reverence
 Me thenketh that this evidence
 As to this point is sufficient.

And touchende of the remenant,
 Which is the thridde of youre axinges,
 What leste is worth of alle thinges, 120
 And costeth most, I telle it, Pride ;
 Which mai noght in the hevene abide,
 For Lucifer with hem that felle
 Bar Pride with him into helle.

¹ 'Offers': Old English *bodian*.

Ther was Pride-of to gret a cost,
 Whan he for Pride hath hevene lost;
 And after that in Paradis
 Adam for Pride loste his pris
 In Midelerthe¹; and ek also
 Pride is the cause of alle wo;
 That al the world ne may suffice
 To stanche of Pride the reprise²:
 Pride is the heved³ of alle Sinne,
 Which wasteth al and mai nocht winne.'

130

The king is so much pleased with her wit and beauty, that he pardons her father, and declares that if only she were of noble birth he would make her his queen. Since he cannot marry the daughter of a simple 'Bachelor', he bids her

'What worldes good that thou wolt crave
 Axe of my yifte and thou schalt have.'

With great humility she answers that her father is a poor man, and that he has recently been in danger of losing all that he has. The king remembers that an earldom has just fallen into his gift, and at once bestows it on the knight. His generosity meets with the following acknowledgement:

This Maiden, which sat on hire kneis
 Tofore the king, hise charitees
 Comendeth, and seide overmore:
 'Mi liege lord, riht now tofore
 Ye seide, as it is of record,
 That if my fader were a lord
 And Pier unto these othre grete
 Ye wolden for noght elles lete⁴
 That I ne scholde be your wif;
 And this wot every worthi lif,

140

¹ The Earth, midway between Heaven and the lower regions.

² i. e. to make Pride cease from retaliation.

³ 'Head': Old English *hēafod*.

⁴ From Old English *lætān*, to give up.

A kinges word it mot be holde.
 Forthi, my lord, if that ye wolde
 So gret a charite fulfille,
 God wot it were wel my wille: 150
 For he which was a Bachelier,
 Mi fader, is now mad a Pier;
 So whenne as evere that I cam,
 An Erles dowhter now I am.'

This yonge king, which peised¹ al
 Hire beaute and hire wit withal,
 As he that was with love hent²,
 Anon therto yaf his assent.
 He myhte noght the maide asterte³
 That sche nis ladi of his herte; 160
 So that he tok hire to his wif
 To holde whyl that he hath lif:
 And thus the king toward his knyht
 Acordeth him as it is riht.

THE MORAL

Forthi, my Sone, if thou wolt love,
 It sit thee wel to leve Pride
 And take Humblesce upon thi side;
 The more of grace thou schalt gete.

¹ 'Weighed': French *peser*.

² From Old English *hentan*, to pursue or seize.

³ 'Escape': cf. use of German *stürzen* for 'to undo'.

JOHN LYDGATE (1370?-1451?), was born at Lydgate near Newmarket, and educated, in all probability, at the Benedictine Monastery of Bury, and perhaps at Gloucester College, Oxford. His version of Aesop's *Dog and Shadow* is said in a note to have been 'done at Oxenforde'. According to Bale he went abroad after leaving the University, and on his return became a school-master. He was well acquainted with Chaucer (of whom he repeatedly calls himself the disciple), and with Thomas Chaucer, the poet's son. Early in the fifteenth century he was introduced at the Court of Henry IV, and, at the request of the Prince of Wales, began in 1412 his epic poem, *Troy Book*, which he finished in 1420. About the same time he wrote the *Tale of Thebes*, in three parts, as an addition to the *Canterbury Tales*. On the accession of Henry VI he was appointed Court Poet, and was patronized by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, for whom he wrote his longest work, *The Falls of Princes*, adapted from a French version of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*. In 1423 he was made Prior of Hatfield Regis: in April 1434 he retired to Bury with a pension, and lived there for the rest of his life. He was a man of wide reading, and a voluminous writer whose reputation, from his own time to the Elizabethan period, ranked with those of Gower and Chaucer. Stowe ascribes 114 works to him, some epic, some devotional (e.g. *The Life of our Lady*, and *The Virtue of the Masse*), some philosophic (e.g. the *Court of Sapience*), and some allegoric (e.g. the *Assembly of the Gods*). His last work was a metrical version of the *Secreta Secretorum*, which he left unfinished at his death. Among the lighter poems attributed to him the most famous is the *London Lackpenny* (or *Lyckpenny*), of which there are two versions; one in Rhyme Royal¹, a favourite metre of the time, the other in the octave stanza which became current later. Critics are divided as to its authenticity (see Miss Hammond's article in *Anglia*, Vol. xx), but it is included under his name in most English anthologies. Many of his works were printed by Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde, and Pynson.

¹ i. e. the seven-line stanza which owes its courtly name to the fact that James I of Scotland employed it for the *King's Quhair*. It is frequently used by Chaucer (e.g. *Troilus and Cressida*) and commonly by Lydgate and Occleve. See the examples of them here quoted.

FROM 'THE HORSE, GOOSE, AND SHEEP'

(The three contend, before the lion and the eagle, as to which
is most profitable to man.)

UPON this matere shortly to conclude,

Nat yoore¹ agon, as I reherse shall,

I fond to purpose a similitude²

Ful craftily depeynted upon a wall:

Tweyn sitt in ther estat Roiall,

The hardy Leoun, famous in al rewmys³,

Th' imperial Egle, pershyng⁴ the sonne bemys.

Thes were the dreedful Roiall Jugis tweyne,

In ther estate sittynge, I took keepe⁵,

That herde the parties bi and bi compleyne, 10

The Hors, the Goos, and eke the simple Sheepe:

The processe was nat to profounde nor deepe

Off that debate, but contrived of a fable

Which of them was to man most profitable.

THE HORSE.

To procede breffly and nat long to tarie,

First, fro the trowthe that I do nat erre,

What beste is found at al so necessarie

As is the Hors, bothe nyh and ferre,

Or so notable to man in pees and werre?

Hors in cronyelis⁶, wo-so looke ariht, 20

Hav be savacion to many a worthi knyht.

Thes Emperours, thes princis, and thes kynges,

Whan thei been armyd in bright plate and mayle,

Withouten Hors what wer here mustrynges,

There brode Baneres and there riche apparaile,

To-fore ther Enmyes to shew them in bataile?

¹ 'Long'. ² Fond, 'found': to purpose, 'appropriate' (Fr.
à propos): similitude, 'picture'. ³ 'Realms'. ⁴ 'Piercing'.
⁵ 'Notice'. ⁶ 'Chronicles'.

Withouten hors, spere, swerde, no shelde
Mihte litel availe for to holde a feeld.

The hardy prikeris¹ upon horse bak
Be sent-to-forn what ground is best to take, 30
In that ordynaunce that ther be no lak
Bi providance, the feelde whan thei shal make,
An hors wole weepe for his maistir sake :
Chauser remembrith the swerd, the ryng, the glas
Presented wern upon a stede of bras².

Lower degrees ther been of hors also
Do grett profite to every comounte³ ;
The plouh, the carte, myhte no thyng doo
Withouten hors, dayly ye may see ;
Tilthe⁴ were lost ne were hors, parde : 40
The besi Marchant to his avauntage
Nar⁵ shippis and hors coude make no cariage.

THE GOOSE.

Whereas thou hast unto thi pasture
But oo place to make in thi repair⁶
It is me grauntid pleylnly by nature
T' abide in thre, lond, watir, and ayer,
Now among floures and grevis⁷ that been fair ;
Now bathe in rivers, swymme in many a pond,
For storme and shoure as drie as on the lond.
Men plukke stalkes out of my weengis tweyn, 50
Some to portraye, some to noote and write,
Whan Rethoriciens han doon ther besy peyn
Fressh Epistolis and lettris to endite.
Without writyng vailleth nat a myte,

¹ 'Light horsemen'. Cf. the first line of the *Faery Queene*.

² Cf. Chaucer, *The Squire's Tale*. ³ 'Community'. ⁴ 'Tillage'.

⁵ i.e. 'ne war' (were there not). ⁶ i.e. 'to repair to'.

⁷ 'Groves'.

For yiff pennys¹ and writyng were away
Off remembraunce we had lost the kay.

Off Gees also the deede is previd off

In many a contre and many a regioun,
To make pilwes² and Fether-beddis soft
Of provident men plukkid of the doun ;

60

Thus, to make a pleyn comparisoun,
As pilwes been to chaumbres agreable,
So is hard strauhe litteer for the stable.

Through al the lond of Brutis Albion,

For fetherid Arwes (as I rehearse can),
Goos is the best (as in comparisoun),

Except fetheris of Pekok or of Swan :

Bi bowe and Arwis, sith the warre began,
Have ynglysshmen, as it is red in story,
On her enmyes had many gret victory.

70

THE SHEEP.

The goos may gagle³, the hors may prike and prauunce.

Neither of hem in prowes may atteyne

For to be set or put in remembraunce

Ageyn the lamb, thouth thei ther-at disdeyne :

For comon profite he passith bothe tweyne :

Weied⁴ and considred thei be no thyng liche

To hym in valew betweene poore and riche.

Off Brutis Albion his wolle is cheeff richesse,

In prys surmounting every othir thyng

Sauff⁵ Greyn and Corn : Marchauntis al expresse

80

Woolle is cheeff tresoure in this lond growyng :

To riche and poore this beeste fynt⁶ clothing :

¹ 'Pens'.

² 'Pillows'.

³ 'Cackle'.

⁴ 'Weighed'.

⁵ 'Except'.

⁶ 'Finds'.

Alle Nacions afferme up to the fulle,
In al the world ther is no bettir wolle.

His fleessh is natural restauracion,

As summe men seyn affir gret siknesse,
Rostid or sodyn¹ holsom is moton,
Wellid with growel², phisiciens expresse
Ful nutritiff affir a gret accesse.

The sheepe also, concludyng doutelees,
Of his nature lovyth rest and pes.

90

For ache of bonys and also for brosure³

It remedieth and dooth men ese ful blyve⁴;
Causith men starkid⁵ bonys to recure;

Dede synnewis⁶ restorith ageyn to live.

Blak sheepis wolle with fresh oil of olive—
These men of Armys with charmys provid good—
At a streight neede thei can weel staunche blood.

THE MORAL.

Odious of old been all comparisouns,

And of comparisons is gendrid hatereede,

100

All folk be not of lik condiciouns,

Nor lik disposid of thouht, wil, or dede.

But this fable which that ye now reede
Contrevud was that who that hath grettest part
Off vertuous yiftis shold with his freend depart⁷.

Thus all vertues alloone⁸ hath nat oo man:

That oon lakkith God hath yove anothir:

That thou canst nat parcas⁹ anothir can:

So entircomon¹⁰ as brothir doth with brothir;

And if charite governe weele the tothir,

110

And in oo clause speke in wordis pleyn,

That no man shold of othir ha disdeyn.

¹ 'Boiled'. ² 'Seethed with broth'. ³ 'Bruises'.
⁴ 'Quickly'. ⁵ 'Stiffened'. ⁶ 'Sinews'. ⁷ 'Share'.
⁸ 'Altogether'. ⁹ 'Perchance' (Fr. *par cas*). ¹⁰ 'Interchange'.

THE LONDON LACKPENNY

To London once my steps I bent,
 Where trouth in no wyse should be faynt¹,
 To Westmynster-ward I forthwith went
 To a man of law to make complaynt;
 I sayd, 'for Mary's love, that holy saynt,
 Pity the poore that wolde proceede';
 But for lack of mony I cold not spede.

Then to the Chepe I began me drawne,
 Where mutch people I saw for to stand;
 One ofred me velvet, sylke, and lawne, 10
 An other he taketh me by the hande,
 'Here is Parys thred, the fynest in the land';
 I never was used to such thyngs indede,
 And wanting mony I might not spede.

Then into Corn-Hyll anon I yode²,
 Where was mutch stolen gere amonge;
 I saw where honge myne owne hoode,
 That I had lost amonge the thronge;
 Now by my own hood I thought it wronge,
 I knew it as well as I dyd my crede, 20
 But for lack of mony I could not spede.

Then hyed I me to Belyngsgate;
 And one cryed, 'Hoo! go we hence!'
 I prayed a barge-man, for God's sake,
 That he wold spare me my expence.

¹ 'Feigned'.

² 'Walked': Old English *ecode*, I went.

'Thou 'scapst not here,' quod he, 'under two pence;
I lyst not yet bestow my almes dede.'

Thus lackyng mony, I could not spede.

Then I convayd me into Kent;

For of the law wold I meddle no more;

30

Because no man to me tooke entent,

I dyght me to do as I dyd before.

Now Jesus, that in Bethlem was bore,

Save London, and send trew lawyers there mede!

For who so wants mony with them shall not spede.

THOMAS OCCLEVE (or HOCCEVE) (1370 ?-1450 ?). Probably a native of London, though Mr. Morley suggests that his name may be derived from Hockcliffe in Bedfordshire. Of his early life all that is known is the confession of a riotous youth which he wrote under the title of *La Male Regle de T. Hoccleve*. For twenty-four years he was clerk in the Privy Seal Office, but his salary was ill-paid, as was the annuity of twenty marks given him on his retirement by Henry IV. For some years he lived in extreme poverty: in 1424 he was granted sustenance in the Priory of Southwick in Hampshire, which maintained him until his death. His longest work was *De Regimine Principum* or the *Gouvernail of Princes*, a didactic poem on kingship derived partly from the *Secreta Secretorum* (see p. 128), partly from the *De Regimine Principum* of Egidius da Colonna, and partly from the *Ludus Schacchorum* of Jacques de Cessoles. In early manhood he was a close friend of Chaucer, whose death, in 1400, he commemorated by the elegiac stanzas here quoted from the *Gouvernail of Princes*. The manuscript of these stanzas preserves in the margin the only authentic portrait of Chaucer,—drawn by Occleve himself. It may be added that Occleve's *Letter to Cupid* was printed in most old editions of Chaucer's poems, and that Mr. Skeat conjecturally assigns to him the *Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, which all complete editions of Chaucer contain at the present time. Of his shorter poems many still remain in manuscript; but one, the *Story of Fortunatus* (from the *Gesta Romanorum*), was included by William Browne in his *Shepherd's Pipe*, 1614.

LINES ON CHAUCER

SYMPLE is my goste¹, and scars my letterure²,

Unto youre excellence for to write

Myne inward love, and yit in aventure

Wol I me put, thogh I can but lyte³;

My dere maister—God his soule quyte,—

And fader, Chaucer, fayne wold have me taught.

But I was dulle, and lerned lyte or naught.

Allas! my worthy maister honorable,

This londes verray tresour and richesse,

Dethe by thy dethe hath harme irreperable

10

Unto us done: hir vengeable duresse⁴

Dispoiled hath this londe of the swetnesse

Of rethoryk, for unto Tullius

Was never man so like amonges us.

Also, who was hyer in phylosofye

To Aristotle, in our tunge, but thou?

The steppes of Virgile in poysye

Thou folwedest eke: men wote well ynow.

That combre-worlde, that the my maister slowe,

(Wolde I slayne were!) Dethe was to hastyf

20

To renne on the, and reve⁵ the thy lyf.

She myght han taryed hir vengeaunce a whyle,

Tyl sum man hadde egal to the be;

Nay, let be that; she wel knew that this yle

May never man forth bringe lik to the,

And hir office nedys do must she;

God bad hire soo, I truste as for the beste,

O maystir, maystir, God thy soule reste!

¹ 'Mind', or 'Spirit'.

² 'Learning'.

³ 'Little'.

⁴ 'Revengeful cruelty'.

⁵ See note 3, p. 55.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE

AMONG the group of English poets who were writing between 1350 and 1450 Chaucer stands pre-eminent, not only for his genius but for the standpoint from which he looked upon romance. In the stories of Gower, of Lydgate, and of Occleve the whole interest is centred on the narration of events; and that not with the frank delight in action which belongs to the early sagas, but with a conscious effort to comment and moralize. Their incidents are selected to exemplify the workings of eternal justice or to inculcate some profitable lesson: their characters are bloodless abstractions, thin embodiments of some particular vice or virtue. But with Chaucer, as we have seen, the whole centre of gravity is shifted to the expression of human nature. His *dramatis personae* are living people, made real through a hundred touches of delicate observation, and presented not in one aspect alone but with a comprehension which was not surpassed until the time of Shakespeare. If any prose writer of the time could have built upon his foundation the English Novel would have dated from the fourteenth century. The chance was lost by the historical accident that Mandeville lived half a century too early, that his work was contemporary with the beginning, not the end, of Chaucer's life. His book of travels, wholly apocryphal, is as vivid in description as a picaresque romance: it gives the entire setting, the entire *mise en scène*—the whole stage is ready for the entry of actors who never appear. It is true that the scenery is derived not from his own imagination but from the legends which he adopted and

incorporated: none the less he claimed it by right of use and adorned it with his own colouring and his admirable gift of style. With the translation of his volume English prose took a new shape: it became more varied, more flexible, more fully adapted to be the vehicle of narrative and description: it clothed its subject no longer in armour but in an easy-fitting garment which allowed free play to the limbs. The book is in no sense a novel, for it lacks both plot and characters, but it possesses in a high degree qualities which might well have been available for a novelist's purpose.

About a hundred years later, in 1470, was completed a work in which both streams of tendency converged. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is not only the greatest of English prose romances, it is also in a very real sense the pioneer of the English novel. Everything is here: style and incident and description, the full sense of chivalry and adventure, the characters well drawn and finely contrasted. The scope of the romance affords less room for broad human types than that of the *Canterbury Tales*, still less for Chaucer's kindly and serene humour: Malory's great strength is in tragedy, in the struggle of opposing forces, in the conflict of will and circumstance, in the pathos of the lost cause and the disappointed hope. There is nothing in literature more touching than the picture of Guenever on her death-bed praying that she may die before Launcelot comes:

And when Sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury, within the Nunnery, Queen Guenever died but half an hour before. And the ladies told Sir Launcelot that Queen Guenever told them all, or she passed, that Sir Launcelot had been priest near a twelvemonth,—‘And hither he cometh as fast as he may to fetch my corpse, and beside my lord King Arthur he shall bury me.’ Wherefore the queen said in hearing of them all, ‘I beseech Almighty God that I may never have power to see Sir Launcelot

with my worldly eyes.' And thus, said all the ladies, was ever her prayer these two days, till she was dead.

Among the happier stories one of the most famous is that of Sir Gareth, who was set to kitchen-service in Arthur's court, and of the adventure by which he won his knighthood. It is here given, not as typical of Malory's manner, for no single excerpt can be quoted as typical, but in the hope that it may induce readers to make themselves acquainted with the rest of the book.

The style of Malory is more mature than that of Mandeville. A century of experience had mellowed the English phrase, and widened still further the English vocabulary. It seems therefore worth while to append to these extracts a passage from Caxton which draws attention to the changes in language, and which discusses some of the problems that they involve.

Finally, for this period, comes Sir Thomas More, scholar, statesman, idealist, and master of Classic prose. The descriptions in *Utopia* differ from those of the Classical English novel only in so far as they are essential, not accessory: and indeed if *Gulliver* can be called a romance it is difficult to see on what grounds the name can be refused to More's masterpiece. It was written, no doubt, with a direct ethical or political purpose, but to this we of the present day have been thoroughly inured: it paints with a hand almost as firm as that of Defoe or Swift, it is touched with a sense of beauty and gentleness which they were incapable of attaining. There needs no glamour of the 'historical estimate' to recognize its purity and nobility of tone, its sterling sense, its clear and lucid style. Some of the lessons which it inculcates are of value in our own time: all are delivered in a phrase which to study is a liberal education.

Note.—In the illustrations of this and the following chapters the spelling has been modernized for convenience of reading, as it is,

for example, in Mr. Rhys' edition of Malory. The reason why the change has been made here is that after Occleve the old spelling is no longer essential to the rhyme or metre of English poetry; that there is therefore no need to retain it in Skelton and his successors; and that the same arguments for abandoning it in Tudor verse apply equally to all mediaeval prose. Students who are interested in this point of orthography will do well to consult the original editions, remembering that Mandeville was contemporary with Chaucer, that the works of Malory and Caxton appeared in the generation after Lydgate, and that More outlived Skelton by seven years.

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE. On Nov. 12, 1372, there died at Liège a physician well known under the name of 'Jean de Bourgogne dit à la Barbe', famous both for his professional skill and for the authorship of a treatise on the Plague. In his will he declared that his real name was 'Messire Jean de Mandeville, Chevalier, Comte de Montfort en Angleterre, et Seigneur de l'isle de Campdi et du Château Perouse'; that having killed 'a Count or Earl' in his own country he had bound himself to traverse three parts of the earth; and that having accomplished his travels he had settled at Liège in 1343. This statement is quoted by Louis Abry from the fourth book (now lost) of the *Myreur des Histors* by Jean d'Outremeuse, who was a personal friend of Bourgogne. There is no historical evidence that Bourgogne's claim is valid, and it seems most probable that he assumed the title of Jean de Mandeville as a pseudonym for the famous book of travels which appeared in 1356. The French copy of 1371, now in the Paris Library, originally formed part of the same MS. as the treatise on the Plague. The book itself, styled by Mr. G. F. Warner 'a deliberate imposture', is in two parts. In the first the author calls himself Jehan de Mandeville or John Maundeville, says that he was born at St. Albans and that he crossed the sea on Michaelmas day 1322, and then proceeds to give an account of the Holy Land, and of the routes thither, for the use of pilgrims bound to Jerusalem. He adds that he wrote in French instead of Latin because the former language was more widely understood. His account is mainly copied from the travels of a German knight, William of Boldensele, who visited the holy places in 1322, and wrote a description of them which appeared twelve years later. There are also frequent borrowings

from the History of the First Crusade by Albert of Aix, and from many other writers, including Pliny and Solinus. The second part professes to give, from personal experience, an account of travel in Asia. This is largely taken from the Eastern travels of Friar Odoric of Pordenone (written about 1330), with additions from the Armenian writer Hetoum, and from the *Speculum* of Vincent de Beauvais. The book, however, was immediately and widely successful, and was soon translated not only into English but into many other languages of Western Europe. The following extract, taken from the second part, will give some idea of its vivacity and picturesqueness. It forms a portion of the description of Central Asia.

THE BOOK OF JOHN MANDEVILLE

CHAPTER XIX

AND now will I tell you of lands and countries and isles that are beyond the land of Cathay. And therefore he that will go from Cathay to Inde the less and the more, he shall go through a kingdom that is called Cadhilhe, the which is a great land. And there groweth a manner of fruit great as gourds, and when it is ripe they open it and find therein a beast with flesh and blood and bone, and it is like to a little lamb without wool. And men of that country eat that beast and the fruit also. And that is a great marvel. Nevertheless I said them that methought¹ it no great marvel, for in my country, I said them, were trees bearing a fruit that becometh birds flying, the which men call Bernakes², and there is good meat of them; and those that fall in the water live and fly forth, and those that fall on the land die. And

¹ 'It seemed to me', from Old English *thyncan*, to seem. It is not connected with *thencan*, to think.

² Barnacle geese, according to popular belief, came out of mollusc-shells which grew upon trees. Half of this belief may be traced to the 'stalk' of the barnacle shell, mistaken for a twig by inaccurate observers: the other half to a verbal confusion between *perna*, a barnacle, and *bernacula*, a Solan goose.

when I had told them this they marvelled them greatly thereof. In this land also are great apples of noble smell and noble savour, and men may find of them on a cluster an hundred and more, and the leaves of the trees are two foot long and some longer. And in that country are trees bearing gariolfes¹ and nutmegs, and great nuts of Inde, and other divers spicerics. And there are vines that bear so great bobbs of grapes that a wight² man may unnethes³ bear one of them.

In this same land are the hills of Caspy which men call Uber. And among those hills are the Jews of the ten kindreds enclosed, which men call Gog and Magog, and they may come out at no side. For King Alexander chased them thither, for he weened to have enclosed them there through working of man; and when he saw that he might not he prayed to God that he would fulfil that he had begun. And, if all he were a heathen man, God of his special grace heard his prayer and closed the hills sammen⁴, the which are so great and so high that no man may pass them. . . . And nought for this⁵ some time it happens that some of them climb over those hills and go out, but there may no great number of them climb over them together by cause of the great height of them and the ill climbing. And there is none other passage out but a narrow sty which was made through slight and working of men. And that passage is but four mile long, and then is there a great desert where men may find no water nor no dwelling for man by reason of dragons and nadders⁶ and other venomous beasts, so that no man

¹ i. e. cloves; French *girofle*.

² 'Strong', from the Scandinavian *vigt*: not connected with Old English *wiht*.

³ 'Uneasily', from Old English *uneathe*. So here 'with difficulty'.

⁴ 'Together': Old English *samen*: cf. German *zusammen*.

⁵ i. e. 'nevertheless'.

⁶ 'Adders'. See note 5, p. 35.

may pass there away but if it be in the winter. And this strait passage call they there Clyrem, and the queen of Amazons gars¹ keep it well. . . . From this land men shall go the land of Bachary, where are many wicked men and fell. In this land are trees that bear wool, as it were of sheep, of which they make cloth. In this land also are many ypotams² that dwell some time upon land and some time on the water, and they are half man and half horse. And they eat men whereso they may get them, no meat gladlier. And in that land are many griffins, more than in any country else. And some men say that they have the shape of an eagle before, and behind the shape of a lion, and sikerly³ they say sooth. Nevertheless the griffin is more and stronger than eight lions of these countries, and greater and stalworther than an hundred eagles. For certainly he will bear to his nest flying a great horse and a man upon him, or two oxen yoked together as they go sammen at the plough. For he has nails upon his feet as great and as long as they were oxen horns, but they are wondrous sharp. And of these nails men make cups for to drink of, as we do of the horns of bugles⁴, and of the backs of his feathers they make strong bows for to shoot with.

Note.—The legend of the lost ten tribes, confined by Alexander within the mountains of Gog and Magog, is common to many mediaeval romances, and may be found in the *Scottish Romance of Kyng Alisaunder* (translated from the French in 1438), in the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, and in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Titurel*. It appears to be derived ultimately from the eighteenth chapter of the *Koran*. See Sale's *Koran*, ii. 104.

¹ Still used in the north for 'to make' or 'effect'. Here almost an auxiliary.

² Possibly meant for 'hippopotamus'.

³ 'Assuredly'.

⁴ 'Wild oxen', from the Latin *buculus*.

SIR THOMAS MALORY (fl. 1470) was, according to Bale, a Welshman. Other authorities have conjectured that he belonged to the English Midlands or to Yorkshire: but of his life nothing is known for certain. His romance the *Morte d'Arthur* was finished in the ninth year of King Edward IV (1470) and was printed by Caxton in 1485. Its materials are derived from various sources—Books i-iv from the French Romance of Merlin by Robert de Borron; Book v from *La Morte Arthure*, an English metrical romance now in Lincoln Cathedral; Book vi from the French Romance of Lancelot; Books viii-x from the Romance of Tristan and the Prophecies of Merlin, both French; Books xi-xvii mainly from the Romance of Lancelot; Books xviii-xxi partly from the Romance of Lancelot, partly from *La Morte Arthure*. For the story of Gareth, Book vii, no original has been found. His debt to both French and English originals has been considerably overestimated, mainly on the strength of a sentence at the end of Book xii, 'Here ends the second book of Syr Trystram that was drawne out of Frensshe.' He was far more than a translator or compiler, and stood in much the same relation to his sources as Chaucer to the *Decameron* or the *Cento Novelle*. The book was reprinted by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 and in 1529, and, though denounced in Ascham's *Scholemaster*, enjoyed a wide popularity and exercised a considerable influence.

THE STORY OF SIR GARETH

I

WHEN King Arthur held his Round Table most plenary, it fortuned that he commanded that the solemn and high feast of Pentecost should be holden at a city and castle, which in those days was called Kin-Kenadon, upon the sands that marched nigh Wales; so King Arthur had ever a custom that at the high feast of Pentecost, especially afore all other high feasts in the year, he would not go that day to meat until he had heard or seen some great adventure or marvel. And for that custom all manner

of strange adventures came before King Arthur at that feast afore all other feasts. And so Sir Gawaine, a little before noon of the day of Pentecost, espied at a window three men on horseback and a dwarf on foot. And so the three men alighted, and the dwarf kept their horses, and one of the three men was higher than the other twain by a foot and a half. Then Sir Gawaine went unto the king and said: 'Sir, go to your meat, for here at hand cometh strange adventures.' So King Arthur went to his meat, with many other kings. And there were all the knights of the Round Table, save those that were prisoners or slain at an encounter. Then at the high feast evermore they should be fulfilled the whole number, an hundred and fifty, for then was the Round Table fully accomplished. Right so came into the hall two men well beseen and richly, and upon their shoulders there leaned the goodliest young man and the fairest that ever they saw, and he was large, long, and broad in the shoulders, and well visaged, and the fairest and the largest hands that ever man saw, but he fared as though he might not go nor bear himself, but if he leaned upon their shoulders. Anon, as King Arthur saw him, there was made silence and room, and right so they went with him unto the high dais, without saying any word, and then this big young man drew him back, and easily stretched up straight, saying to King Arthur, 'God bless you, and all your fair fellowship, and in especial the fellowship of the Round Table. And for this cause I am come hither, for to pray you to give me three gifts, and they shall not be unreasonably asked, but that ye may worshipfully and honourably grant them unto me, and to you no great hurt nor loss. And as for the first gift I will ask now, and the other two gifts I will ask at the same day twelve months wheresover that ye hold your

high feast.' 'Now ask,' said King Arthur, 'and ye shall have your petition.' 'Now, sir,' said he, 'this is my petition for this feast, that ye will give me meat and drink sufficiently for these twelve months, and at that day I will ask mine other two gifts.' 'My fair son,' said King Arthur, 'ask better, I counsel thee, for this is but a simple asking, for my heart giveth me to thee greatly that thou art come of men of worship, and greatly my conceit faileth me but thou shalt prove a man of right great worship.' 'Sir,' said he, 'as for that, be it as it may be, I have asked that I will ask.' 'Well,' said King Arthur, 'ye shall have meat and drink enough; I never defended¹ that none, neither my friend nor foe. But what is thy name? I would fain know.' 'I cannot tell you,' said he. 'That have I marvel of thee,' said the king, 'that thou knowest not thine own name, and thou art one of the goodliest young men that ever I saw.' Then the noble King Arthur betook him unto the steward Sir Kay, and charged him that he should give him of all manner of meats, and drinks of the best, and also that he have all manner of finding, as though he were a lord's son. 'That shall little need,' said Sir Kay, 'to do such cost upon him, for I dare well undertake that he is a villein born, and never will make man, for and he had been come of a gentleman, he would have asked of you horse and harness, but such as he is he hath asked. And sithen he hath no name, I shall give him a name, that shall be Beaumains, that is to say, fair hands, and into the kitchen I shall bring him, and there he shall have brewis² every day, that he shall be as fat by the twelve months' end as a pork hog.' Right so the two men that had brought him departed, and left him to Sir Kay, that scorned and mocked him.

¹ 'Refused'.

² 'Broth'.

II

THEREAT was Sir Gawaine wroth, and especially Sir Launcelot, for he bade Sir Kay leave his mocking, 'for I dare lay my head he shall prove a man of great worship.' 'Let be,' said Sir Kay, 'it cannot be by reason; for as he is, so hath he asked.' 'Beware,' said Sir Launcelot, 'so ye gave that good knight, Sir Brehnour, Sir Dinadan's brother, a name, and ye called him La-Cote-Male-Taile, and that turned you to anger afterward.' 'As for that,' said Sir Kay, 'this shall never prove no such, for Sir Brehnour desired evermore worship, and this desireth bread and drink; upon pain of my life he was brought up and fostered in some abbey, and howsomever it was, they failed of meat and drink, and so hither he is come for sustenance.' And so Sir Kay had got him a place, and sat down to meat. So Beaumains went to the hall door, and sat him down among boys and lads, and there he ate sadly. And then Sir Launcelot, after meat, bade him come to his chamber, and there he should have meat and drink enough. And so did Sir Gawaine. But he refused them all; he would do nothing but as Sir Kay commanded him, for no proffer. But as touching Sir Gawaine, he had reason to proffer him lodging, meat, and drink; for that proffer came of his blood, for he was nearer kin to him than he wist. But that Sir Launcelot did, was of his great gentleness and courtesy. So thus he was put into the kitchen, and lay every night as the boys of the kitchen did; and so he endured all those twelve months, and never displeased man nor child, but always he was meek and mild. But ever when he knew of any jousting of knights, that would he see and he might. And ever Sir Launcelot would give him gold to spend and clothes, and so did Sir Gawaine. And whereas were any masteries done, there would he be; and there might none cast the

bar or stone to him by two yards. Then would Sir Kay say, 'How like you my boy of the kitchen?' So it passed on till the feast of Pentecost, and at that time the king held it at Carlion, in the most royalest wise that might be, like as yearly he did. But the king would eat no meat on the Whitsunday till he had heard of some adventure. And then came there a squire to the king, and said: 'Sir, ye may go to your meat, for here cometh a damosel with some strange adventure.' Then was the king glad, and set him down. Right so there came in a damosel, and saluted the king, and prayed him for succour. 'For whom?' said the king: 'what is the adventure?' 'Sir,' said she, 'I have a lady of great worship and renown, and she is besieged with a tyrant, so that she may not go out of her castle, and because that here in your court are called the noblest knights of the world, I come unto you and pray you for succour.' 'What call ye your lady, and where dwelleth she, and who is he and what is his name that hath besieged her?' 'Sir king,' said she, 'as for my lady's name, that shall not be known for me as at this time; but I let you wit she is a lady of great worship, and of great lands. And as for the tyrant that besiegeth her and destroyeth her land, he is called the red knight of the reed lands.' 'I know him not,' said the king. 'Sir,' said Sir Gawaine, 'I know him well, for he is one of the perilous knights of the world; men say that he hath seven men's strength, and from him I escaped once full hard with my life.' 'Fair damosel,' said the king, 'there be knights here that would do their power to rescue your lady, but because ye will not tell her name nor where she dwelleth, therefore none of my knights that be here now shall go with you by my will.' 'Then must I speak further,' said the damosel.

III

THEN with these words came before the king Beaumains, while the damosel was there; and thus he said: 'Sir king, God thank you, I have been these twelve months in your kitchen, and have had my full sustenance, and now I will ask my two gifts that be behind.' 'Ask upon my peril,' said the king. 'Sir, these shall be my two gifts: first, that ye will grant me to have this adventure of the damosel, for it belongeth to me.' 'Thou shalt have it,' said the king; 'I grant it thee.' 'Then, sir, this is now the other gift; that ye shall bid Sir Launcelot du Lake to make me a knight, for of him I will be made knight, and else of none; and when I am past, I pray you let him ride after me, and make me knight when I require him.' 'All this shall be done,' said the king. 'Fie on thee,' said the damosel; 'shall I have none but one that is your kitchen page?' Then was she wroth, and took her horse and departed. And with that there came one to Beaumains, and told him that his horse and armour was come for him, and there was a dwarf come with all things that him needed in the richest manner. Thereat all the court had much marvel from whence came all that gear. So when he was armed there was none but few so goodly a man as he was. And right so he came into the hall, and took his leave of King Arthur and of Sir Gawaine, and of Sir Launcelot, and prayed him that he would lie after him; and so departed and rode after the damosel.

IV

BUT there went many after to behold how well he was horsed and trapped in cloth of gold, but he had neither shield nor spear. Then Sir Kay said openly in the hall: 'I will ride after my boy of the kitchen, for to wit whether he will know me for his better.' Sir Launcelot

and Sir Gawaine said, 'Yet abide at home.' So Sir Kay made him ready, and took his horse and his spear, and rode after him. And right as Beaumains overtook the damosel, right so came Sir Kay, and said: 'What, Sir Beaumains, know ye not me?' Then he turned his horse, and knew that it was Sir Kay which had done him all the despite that ye have heard afore. 'Yea,' said Beaumains, 'I know you for an ungentle knight of the court, and therefore beware of me.' Therewith Sir Kay put his spear in the rest, and run straight to him, and Beaumains came as fast upon him with his sword in his hand; and so he put away the spear with his sword, and with a foin thrust him through the side, that Sir Kay fell down as he had been dead; and he alight down, and took Sir Kay's shield and his spear, and start upon his own horse and rode his way. All that saw Sir Launcelot, and so did the damosel. And then he bade his dwarf start upon Sir Kay's horse, and so he did. By that Sir Launcelot was come. Then he proffered Sir Launcelot to joust, and either made them ready, and came together so fiercely that either bare down other to the earth, and sore were they bruised. Then Sir Launcelot arose, and helped him to avoid his horse. And then Beaumains put his shield before him, and proffered to fight with Sir Launcelot on foot, and so they rashed together like two wild boars, trasing, rasing, and foining¹ to the length of an hour; and Sir Launcelot felt him so big, that he marvelled of his strength, for he fought more like a giant than a knight, and that his fighting was durable and passing perilous; for Sir Launcelot had much ado with him, that he dread himself to be ashamed, and said: 'Beaumains, fight not so sore; your quarrel and mine is not so great but we may leave off.' 'Truly that is

¹ i. e. turning, rushing, and thrusting.

truth,' said Beaumains, 'but it doth me good to feel your might, and yet, my lord, I have not showed the uttermost.'

V

'In God's name,' said Sir Launcelot, 'for I promise you by the faith of my body I had as much to do as I might to save myself from you unshamed, and therefore have no doubt of none earthly knight.' 'Hope ye that I may any while stand a proved knight,' said Beaumains. 'Yea,' said Sir Launcelot, 'do ye as ye have done, and I shall be your warrant.' 'Then I pray you,' said Beaumains, 'give me the order of knighthood.' 'Then must ye tell me your name,' said Sir Launcelot, 'and of what kin ye be born.' 'Sir, so that you will not discover me, I shall tell you,' said Beaumains. 'Nay,' said Sir Launcelot, 'and that I promise you by the faith of my body, until it be openly known.' 'Then, sir,' said he, 'my name is Gareth of Orkney, and brother unto Sir Gawaine of father and mother.' 'Ah, sir,' said Sir Launcelot, 'I am now more gladder of you than I was, for ever methought ye should be of a great blood, and that ye came not to the court for meat nor drink.' And then Sir Launcelot gave him the order of knighthood. And then Sir Gareth prayed him to depart and let him go on his journey. So Sir Launcelot departed from him, and came to Sir Kay, and made him to be borne upon his shield, and so he was healed hard with his life; and all men scorned Sir Kay, and especially Sir Gawaine, and also Sir Launcelot said that it was not his part to rebuke no young man, for full little knew he of what kin he is come, and for what cause he came unto this court. And so we leave off Sir Kay, and turn we unto Beaumains. When he had overtaken the damosel, anon she said: 'What doest thou here? thou stinkest all of the kitchen; thy clothes be all dirty of the grease and tallow that

thou hast gotten in King Arthur's kitchen. Weenest thou,' said she, 'that I allow thee for yonder knight that thou hast slain? nay, truly, for thou slewest him unhappily¹ and cowardly, therefore return again, dirty kitchen page. I know thee well, for Sir Kay named thee Beaumains. What art thou but a lusk² and a turner of broaches and a washer of dishes!' 'Damosel,' said Sir Beaumains, 'say to me what ye list, I will not go from you whatsoever ye say, for I have undertaken of King Arthur for to achieve your adventure, and I shall finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore.' 'Fie on thee, kitchen knave. Wilt thou finish mine adventure? thou shalt anon be met withal, that thou wouldst not, for all the broth that ever thou suppest, once look him in the face.' 'I shall assay,' said Beaumains. So as they thus rode in the wood, there came a man flying all that he might. 'Whither wilt thou?' said Beaumains. 'O lord,' said he, 'help me, for hereby in a slade³ are six thieves which have taken my lord and bound him, and I am afraid lest they will slay him.' 'Bring me thither,' said Sir Beaumains. And so they rode together till they came there as the knight was bound, and then he rode unto the thieves, and strake one at the first stroke to death, and then another, and at the third stroke he slew the third thief; and then the other three fled, and he rode after and overtook them, and then those three thieves turned again and hard assailed Sir Beaumains; but at the last he slew them; and then returned and unbound the knight. And the knight thanked him, and prayed him to ride with him to his castle there a little beside, and he should worshipfully reward him for his good deeds. 'Sir,' said Sir Beaumains, 'I will no reward have; I was this day made knight of the noble Sir Launce-

¹ 'Bymisadventure'. ² 'Sluggard'. ³ 'Hollow' (O.E. *slæd*, a valley).

lot, and therefore I will have no reward, but God reward me. And also I must follow this damosel.' And when he came nigh her, she bade him ride from her, 'for thou smellest all of the kitchen. Weenest thou that I have joy of thee? for all this deed that thou hast done, is but mishappened thee. But thou shalt see a sight that shall make thee to turn again, and that lightly.' Then the same knight which was rescued of the thieves rode after the damosel, and prayed her to lodge with him all that night. And because it was near night, the damosel rode with him to his castle, and there they had great cheer. And at supper the knight set Sir Beaumains before the damosel. 'Fie, fie,' said she, 'sir knight, ye are uncourteous for to set a kitchen page before me; him beseemeth better to stick a swine than to sit before a damosel of high parentage.' Then the knight was ashamed of her words, and took him up and set him at a sideboard, and set himself before him. And so all that night they had good and merry rest.

VI

So on the morrow the damosel and he took their leave, and thanked the knight, and so departed, and rode on their way till they came to a great forest, and there was a great river and but one passage, and there were ready two knights on the further side, to let¹ them the passage. 'What sayest thou?' said the damosel; 'wilt thou match yonder two knights, or wilt thou return again?' 'Nay,' said Sir Beaumains, 'I will not return again, and they were six more.' And therewith he rashed into the water, and in the midst of the water either break their spears to their hands, and then they drew their swords and smote each at other eagerly; and at the last, Sir Beaumains smote the other upon the helm that his

¹ 'Hinder': see note 4, p. 136.

head was astonished, and therewith he fell down into the water, and there was drowned. And then he spurred his horse unto the land, where the other knight fell upon him and brake his spear, and so they drew their swords and fought long together. At the last Sir Beaumains clove his helm and his head unto the shoulders. And then he rode unto the damosel, and bade her ride forth on her way. 'Alas,' said she, 'that ever kitchen page should have the fortune to destroy such two doughty knights! thou weenest thou hast done doughtily, and that is not so, for the first knight's horse stumbled and there he was drowned in the water, and never it was by thy force and might; and the last knight by mishap thou camest behind him, and shamefully thou slewest him.' 'Damosel,' said Sir Beaumains, 'ye may say what ye will, but with whomsoever I have ado withal, I trust to God to serve him or he depart, and therefore I reckon not what ye say, so that I may win your lady.' 'Fie, fie, foul kitchen knave; thou shalt see knights that shall abate thy boast.' 'Fair damosel, give me fair language, and then my care is past, for what knights soever they be I care not, nor doubt them not.' 'Also,' said she, 'I say it for thine avail, yet mayest thou turn again with thy worship, for if thou follow me thou art but slain, for I see all that ever thou doest is but by misadventure, and not by prowess of thy hands.' 'Well, damosel, ye may say what ye will, but wheresoever that ye go I will follow you.' So thus Sir Beaumains rode with the damosel until even-song, and ever she chid him and would not rest. And then they came to a black land, and there was a black hawthorn, and thereon hung a black banner, and on the other side there hung a black shield, and by it stood a black spear and a long, and a great black horse covered with silk, and a black stone fast by it.

VII

THERE sat a knight all armed in black harness, and his name was the knight of the black lands. When the damosel saw the black knight, she bade Sir Beaumains flee down the valley, for his horse was not saddled. 'I thank you,' said Sir Beaumains, 'for always ye will have me a coward.' With that the black knight came to the damosel, and said, 'Fair damosel, have ye brought this knight from King Arthur's court to be your champion?' 'Nay, fair knight,' said she, 'this is but a kitchen knave, that hath been fed in King Arthur's kitchen for alms.' 'Wherefore cometh he in such array?' said the knight; 'it is great shame that he beareth you company.' 'Sir, I cannot be delivered of him,' said the damosel, 'for with me he rideth maugre mine head; would to God ye would put him from me, or else to slay him if ye may, for he is an unhappy knave, and unhappy hath he done to-day through misadventure; for I saw him slay two knights at the passage of the water, and other deeds he did before right marvellous, and all through unhappiness.' 'That marvelleth me,' said the black knight, 'that any man the which is of worship will have to do with him.' 'Sir, they know him not,' said the damosel, 'and because he rideth with me, they think he is some man of worship born.' 'That may well be,' said the black knight; 'nevertheless howbeit you say that he is no man of worship, yet he is a full likely person, and full like to be a strong man; but thus much shall I grant you,' said the black knight, 'I shall put him down upon his feet, and his horse and his armour he shall leave with me, for it were shame for me to do him any more harm.' When Sir Beaumains heard him say thus to her, he said, 'Sir knight, thou art full large¹ of my horse and my harness; I let thee to wit it cost thee nought, and, whether it liketh

¹ 'Generous'.

thee or not, this land will I pass maugre thine head, and horse nor harness gettest thou none of me, but if thou win them with thy hands; and therefore let me see what thou canst do.' 'Sayest thou that,' said the black knight; 'now yield thy lady from thee lightly, for it beseemeth not a kitchen knave to ride with such a lady.' 'Thou liest,' said Sir Beaumains; 'I am a gentleman born, and of more high lineage than thou art, and that I will prove upon thy body.' Then in great wrath they departed with their horses, and came together as it had been thunder, and the black knight's spear brake, and Sir Beaumains thrust him through both his sides, and there-with his spear brake, and the truncheon stuck still in his side, but nevertheless the black knight drew his sword, and smote many eager strokes and of great might, and hurt Sir Beaumains full sore. But at the last the black knight within an hour and a half fell down from his horse in a swoond, and there died forthwith. And when Sir Beaumains saw him so well horsed and armed, he alighted down, and armed him in his armour, and so took his horse and rode after the damosel. When she saw him come nigh her, she said to him, 'Away, kitchen knave, go out of the wind, for the smell of thy dirty clothes grieveth me. Alas! that ever such a knave as thou hast slain, should by mishap slay so good a knight as thou hast slain, but all this is through thine unhappiness. But hereby is a knight that shall pay thee all thy payment, and therefore yet I counsel thee to flee back.' 'It may happen me,' said Sir Beaumains, 'to be beaten or slain, but I warn you, fair damosel, I will not flee away from him, nor leave your company for all that ye can say; for ever ye say that they slay me or beat me, but howsoever it happeneth I escape, and they lie on the ground, and therefore it were as good for you to hold you still than thus to

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rebuke me all day, for away will I not till I feel the uttermost of this journey, or else I will be slain or truly beaten; therefore ride on your way, for follow you I will whatsoever happen.'

VIII

Thus as they rode together they saw a knight come driving by them all in green, both his horse and his harness, and when he came nigh the damosel, he asked of her, 'Is that my brother the black knight that ye have brought with you?' 'Nay, nay,' said she, 'this unhappy kitchen knave hath slain your brother through unhappiness.' 'Alas!' said the green knight, 'that is great pity that so noble a knight as he was should so unhappily be slain, and namely of a knave's hand, as ye say he is. A traitor,' said the green knight, 'thou shalt die for slaying of my brother; he was a full noble knight, and his name was Sir Percard.' 'I defy thee,' said Sir Beaumains, 'for I let thee to wit I slew him knightly, and not shamefully.' Therewithal the green knight rode unto an horn that was green, and it hung upon a thorn, and there he blew three deadly notes, and there came three damosels that lightly armed him. And then took he a great horse, and a green shield, and a green spear. And then they ran together with all their might, and brake their spears to their hands. And then anon they drew out their swords and gave many sad strokes, and either of them wounded other full evil. And at the last at an overthwart¹ Sir Beaumains' horse strook the green knight's horse on the on side, that he fell to the ground. And then the green knight lightly avoided his horse, and dressed him upon his feet. That saw Sir Beaumains, and therewith he alighted, and they rashed together like two mighty champions a long while, and

¹ i. e. 'aslant'.

they bled sore both. With that came the damosel, and said, 'My lord the green knight, for shame, why stand ye so long fighting with that kitchen knave? alas! it is shame that ever ye were made a knight, for to see such a stinking boy match such a valiant knight as ye be.' The green knight hearing these words was ashamed, and incontinent he gave Sir Beaumains a mighty stroke and clove his shield throughout. When Sir Beaumains saw his shield clove asunder, he was a little ashamed of that stroke and of the damosel's language, and then he gave him such a buffet upon the helm that he fell on his knees, and suddenly Sir Beaumains threw him down on the ground grovelling. And incontinent the green knight cried Sir Beaumains' mercy, and yielded him unto Sir Beaumains, and prayed him to grant him his life. 'All this is in vain,' said Sir Beaumains, 'for thou shalt die but if this damosel which is come with me pray me to save thy life.' And therewith he unlaced his helm, like as he would have slain him. 'Fie upon thee, thou kitchen page, I will never pray thee to save his life. For I will never be so much in thy danger¹.' 'Then shall he die,' said Sir Beaumains. 'Not so hardy, thou knave,' said the damosel, 'that thou slay him.' 'Alas!' said the green knight, 'suffer me not to die, for a fair word may save my life. Oh, fair knight,' said the green knight, 'save my life, and I will forgive the death of my brother, and for ever to become thy man, and thirty knights that hold of me for ever shall do you service.' 'In the devil's name,' said the damosel, 'that such a kitchen knave should have thee and thirty knights' service.' 'Sir knight,' said Sir Beaumains, 'all this availleth not, but if my damosel speak with me for thy life.' And therewithal he made semblance to slay him. 'Let be,' said the damosel, 'thou knave, slay him not, for

¹ i. e. 'at thy mercy'.

if thou do, thou shalt repent it.' 'Damosel,' said Sir Beaumains, 'your charge is to me a pleasure, and at your commandment his life shall be saved, and else not.' Then he said, 'Sir knight with the green arms, I release thee quit at this damosel's request, for I will not make her wroth; I will fulfil all that she chargeth me.' And then the green knight kneeled down and did him homage with his sword. Then said the damosel, 'Me repenteth, green knight, of your homage, and of your brother's death, the black knight, for of your help I had great need, for I am sore adread to pass this great forest.' 'Nay, dread ye not so sore,' said the green knight, 'for ye shall lodge with me this night, and to-morrow I shall help you through this forest.' So they took their horses and rode unto his manor, which was fast there beside.

X

So within a while they saw a tower as white as any snow, well matchecold¹ all about, and double ditched; and over the tower gate there hung fifty shields of divers colours. And under that tower there was a fair meadow, and therein were many knights and squires in pavilions and upon scaffolds to behold, for there on the morrow should be a great tournament at that castle, and the lord of that tower was in his castle, and looked out at a window, and there he saw a damosel and a page, and a knight armed at all points. 'So God me help,' said the lord, 'with that knight will I joust, for I see that he is a knight errant.' And so anon he armed him, and took his horse hastily; and when he was on horseback with his shield and his spear, which was all red, both his horse and his harness, and all that belonged unto him, and when he

¹ 'Machicolated', i.e. with parapets, supported on arches, projecting from the walls.

came nigh Sir Beaumains, he weened he had been his brother the black knight, and then he cried aloud: 'Brother, what do ye here in these marches?' 'Nay, nay,' said the damosel, 'it is not your brother; this is but a kitchen knave, which hath been brought up for alms in King Arthur's court.' 'Nevertheless,' said the red knight, 'I will speak with him or he depart.'

'Ah,' said the damosel, 'this unhappy knave hath slain your brother, and Sir Kay named him Beaumains, and this horse and harness was your brother's the black knight. Also I saw him overcome your brother the green knight with his own hands. Now may ye be revenged upon him, for I cannot be quit of him.' And with this both the knights departed asunder, and they came together with all their might, and either of their horses fell to the earth, and lightly they avoided their horses and put their shields afore them, and drew their swords, and either gave to other many sad strokes, as now here and now there, rasing, trasing, foining, and hurling like two boars, the space of two hours. And then the damosel cried out on high unto the red knight, 'Alas, thou noble red knight, think what worship hath followed thee: let never a kitchen knave endure thee so long as he doth.' Then the red knight waxed wroth and doubled his strokes, and hurt Sir Beaumains wondrous sore, so that the blood ran down to the ground, and great marvel it was to behold that strong battle. Yet at the last Sir Beaumains struck him to the earth; and as he would have slain the red knight, he cried mercy, saying: 'Noble knight, slay me not, and I shall yield me unto thee with fifty knights that be at my command; and I forgive thee all the despite that thou hast done to me, and the death of my brother the black knight.' 'All this availeth thee not,' said Sir Beaumains, 'but if my damosel pray me

to save thy life.' And therewith he made semblance to strike off his head. 'Let be, thou Beaumains, slay him not, for he is a noble knight, and not so hardy upon thine head but that thou save him.' Then Sir Beaumains bade the red knight stand up, 'and thank ye now the damosel for your life.' Then the red knight prayed him to see his castle, and to be there all that night; and so the damosel granted him, and there they had merry cheer. But always the damosel spake many foul words unto Sir Beaumains, whereof the red knight had great marvel; and all that night the red knight made threescore knights to watch Sir Beaumains, that he should have no shame nor villany. And on the morrow they heard mass and brake their fast; and the red knight came before Sir Beaumains with his threescore knights, and there he proffered him his homage and fealty at all times he and his knights to do him service. 'I thank you,' said Sir Beaumains, 'but this ye shall grant me, when I call upon you, to come afore my lord King Arthur, and yield you unto him to be his knight.' 'Sir,' said the red knight, 'I will be ready with all my fellowship at your command.' So Sir Beaumains and the damosel departed, and ever she rode chiding him in the foulest manner.

XI

'DAMOSEL,' said Sir Beaumains, 'ye are uncourteous so to rebuke me as ye do, for meseemeth I have done you great service, and ever ye threaten me for I shall be beaten with knights that we meet, but ever for all your best they lie in the dust or in the mire, and therefore I pray you rebuke me no more, and when ye see me beaten or yielding recreant, then may ye bid me go from you shamefully; but first I let you to wit I will not depart from you, for I were worse than a fool if I would depart from

you all the while I win worship.' 'Well,' said she, 'right soon there shall meet with thee a knight that shall pay thee all thy wages, for he is the man of the most worship in the world, except King Arthur.' 'I will it well,' said Sir Beaumains, 'the more he is of worship, the more shall it be my worship to have ado with him.' Then anon within a while they were ware whereas was before them a fair city, and between them and the city a mile and a half there was a fair meadow that was new mown, and therein were many pavilions goodly to behold. 'Lo,' said the damosel, 'yonder is a lord that oweth yonder city, and his custom is such, that when the weather is fair he lieth in this meadow for to joust and tourney, and ever there be about him five hundred knights and all gentlemen of arms, and there be of all manner of games that any gentleman can devise or think.' 'That goodly lord,' said Sir Beaumains, 'I would fain see. . . . Let him come, and then let him do his worst.' 'Sir,' said she, 'I marvel what thou art, and of what kin thou art come; boldly thou speakest, and boldly thou hast done, that have I well seen; therefore I pray thee save thyself and thou mayest, for thine horse and thou have had great travail, and I dread me we dwell over long from the siege, for it is but seven mile hence, and all perilous passages we are past, save all only this passage, and here I dread me full sore, lest that ye shall catch some hurt or damage, and therefore I would ye were hence, that ye were not bruised nor hurt with this strong knight; but I let you to wit that this Sir Persaunt of Inde is nothing of might nor of strength unto the knight that hath laid the siege about my lady.' 'As for that,' said Sir Beaumains, 'be it as it may, for sith I am come so nigh this good knight, I will prove his might or I depart from him. It were great shame to me if I with-

drew me now from him, and therefore, damosel, have ye no doubt by the grace of God I shall so deal with this knight that within two hours after noon ye shall deliver him, and then shall we come to the siege by daylight.' 'Oh, Jesus,' said the damosel, 'I have marvel what manner of man ye be, for it may never be otherwise but that ye be come of a noble blood, for more fouler nor more shamefuller did never woman rule nor rebuke a knight as I have done to you, and ever courteously ye have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood and lineage.' 'Damosel,' said Sir Beaumains, 'a knight may little do that may not suffer a damosel; for whatsoever that ye said to me, I took no heed to your words, for the more ye said the more ye angered me, and my wrath I wreaked upon them that I had ado withal, and therefore all the missaying that ye missayed me furthered me in my battles, and caused me to think to show and prove myself at the end what I was; for peradventure though I had meat in King Arthur's kitchen, yet I might have had meat enough in other places; but all that I did for to prove and to assay my friends, and that shall be known another day; and whether I be a gentleman born or no, I let you wit, fair damosel, I have done you gentleman's service, and peradventure better service yet will I do you or I depart from you.' 'Alas,' said she, 'fair Sir Beaumains, forgive me all that I have missayed and misdane against you.' 'With all my heart,' said Sir Beaumains, 'I forgive it you, for ye did nothing but as ye ought to do, for all your evil words pleased me; and, damosel,' said Sir Beaumains, 'sith it liketh you to speak thus fair to me, wit ye well it gladdeth greatly mine heart; and now meseemeth there is no knight living but I am able enough for him.'

XII

WITH this Sir Persaunt of Inde had espied them, as they hoved¹ in the field, and knightly he sent to them to know whether he came in war or in peace. 'Say unto thy lord,' said Sir Beaumains, 'I take no force², but whether as him list himself.' So the messenger went again unto Sir Persaunt, and told him all his answer. 'Well,' said he, 'then will I have ado with him to the uttermost'; and so he purveyed him, and rode against him. And when Sir Beaumains saw him, he made him ready, and there they met with all the might that their horses might run, and brake their spears either in three pieces, and their horses rashed so together that both their horses fell dead to the earth; and lightly they avoided their horses, and put their shields before them, and drew their swords, and gave each other many great strokes, that sometime they so hurled together that they fell both grovelling on the ground. Thus they fought two hours and more, that their shields and their hauberks were forhewn, and in many places they were sore wounded. So at the last Sir Beaumains smote him through the cost³ of the body, and then he retrayed⁴ him here and there, and knightly maintained his battle long time. And at the last Sir Beaumains smote Sir Persaunt on the helm that he fell grovelling to the earth, and then he leapt overthwart upon him, and unlaced his helmet for to have slain him. Then Sir Persaunt yielded him, and asked him mercy. With that came the damosel and prayed him to save his life. 'I will well,' said Sir Beaumains, 'for it were pity that this noble knight should die.' 'Gramercy,' said Sir Persaunt, 'gentle knight and damosel, for certainly now I know well it was you that slew the black knight my brother at the black thorn; he was a full noble knight, ¹ i.e. 'appeared'. ² i.e. 'I care not'. ³ 'Side'. ⁴ 'Withdrew'.

his name was Sir Percard. Also I am sure that ye are he that won mine other brother the green knight; his name was Sir Pertolope. Also ye won the red knight my brother, Sir Perimones. And now, sir, sith ye have won these knights, this shall I do for to please you: ye shall have homage and fealty of me, and an hundred knights to be always at your command, to go and ride where ye will command us.' And so they went unto Sir Persaunt's pavilion, and there he drank wine and eat spices.

XV

Now speak we of Sir Beaumains, that all night lay in the hermitage, and on the morrow he and the damosel Linet heard a mass and brake their fast. And then they took their horses and rode through out a fair forest, and then they came unto a plain, and saw whereas were many pavilions and tents, and a fair castle, and there was much smoke and great noise. And when they came near the siege, Sir Beaumains espied upon great trees, as he rode, how there hung goodly armed knights by the necks, and their shields about their necks with their swords, and gilted spurs upon their heels, and so there hung shamefully nigh forty knights with rich arms. Then Sir Beaumains abated his countenance, and said, 'What thing meaneth this?' 'Fair sir,' saith the damosel, 'abate not your cheer for all this sight, for ye must encourage yourself, or else ye be all shent¹, for all these knights came hither unto this siege to rescue my sister Dame Lyones, and when the red knight of the red lands had overcome them, he put them to this shameful death, without mercy and pity, and in the same wise he will serve you, but if ye quit you the better.' 'Now Jesu defend me,' said Sir Beaumains, 'from such a villainous

¹ 'Disgraced'. (Cf. 'shenship' seven lines later.)

death and shenship of arms! for rather than thus I should be faring withal, I would rather be slain manfully in plain battle.' 'So were ye better,' said the damosel, 'trust not in him, for in him is no courtesy, but all goeth to the death or shameful murder, and that is great pity, for he is a full likely man and well made of body, and a full noble knight of prowess, and a lord of great lands and possessions.' 'Truly,' said Sir Beaumains, 'he may well be a good knight, but he useth shameful customs, and it is great marvel that he endureth so long, that none of the noble knights of my lord King Arthur's court have not dealt with him.' And then they rode unto the ditches, and saw them double ditched with full strong walls, and there were lodged many great estates¹ and lords nigh the walls, and there was great noise of minstrels, and the sea beat upon the one side of the walls, whereas were many ships and mariners' noise with 'Hale and Ho!' And also there was fast by a sycamore tree, and thereon hung a horn, the greatest that ever they saw, of an elephant's bone. 'And this knight of the red lands hath hanged it up there, that if there come any errant knight, he must blow that horn, and then will he make him ready and come out unto him to do battle with him; but, sir, I pray you,' said the damosel Linet, 'blow ye not the horn till it be high noon, for now it is about prime, and now increaseth his might, which as men say he hath seven men's strength.' 'Ah! fie for shame, fair damosel, say ye never so more to me, for and he were as good a knight as ever was, I shall never fail him in his most might, for either will I worshipfully win worship, or die knightly in the field.' And therewith he spurred his horse unto the sycamore tree, and blew the horn so eagerly, that all the siege² and the castle rang thereof.

¹ i.e. 'men of rank'.

² 'Place' (lit. 'seat').

And then knights leapt there out of their tents and pavilions, and they that were within the castle looked over the walls and out at the windows. Then the red knight of the red lands armed him hastily, and two barons set on his spurs upon his heels, and all was blood red, his armour, spear, and shield, and an earl buckled his helm upon his head; and then they brought him a red spear and a steed, and so he rode into a little vale under the castle, that all that were in the castle and at the siege might behold the battle.

XVI

'Sir,' said the damosel Linet unto Sir Beaumains, 'look that ye be merry and light, for yonder is your deadly enemy, and at yonder window is my lady my sister Dame Lyones.' 'Where?' said Sir Beaumains. 'Yonder,' said the damosel, and pointed with her finger. 'That is sooth,' said Sir Beaumains; 'she seemeth afar the fairest lady that ever I looked upon, and truly,' said he, 'I ask no better quarrel than now to do battle, for truly she shall be my lady, and for her will I fight.' And ever he looked up to the window with glad cheer. And the Lady Lyones made curtesy to him down to the ground, holding up her hands. With that the red knight of the red lands called to Sir Beaumains, 'Leave, sir knight, thy looking, and behold me, I counsel thee, for I warn thee well she is my lady, and for her I have done many strong battles.' 'If thou have so done,' said Sir Beaumains, 'meseemeth it but waste labour, for she loveth none of thy fellowship, and thou to love that loveth not thee, it is a great folly; for if I understood that she were not glad of my coming, I would be advised or I did battle for her, but I understand by the besieging of this castle, she may forbear thy company. And therefore wit

thou well, thou red knight of the red lands, I love her and will rescue her, or else die in the quarrel.' 'Sayest thou that?' said the red knight; 'meseemeth thou ought of reason to beware by yonder knights that thou sawest hang upon yonder great elms.' 'Fie, fie, for shame,' said Sir Beaumains, 'that ever thou shouldest say or do so evil and such shamefulness, for in that thou shamest thyself and the order of knighthood, and thou mayest be sure there will no lady love thee that knoweth thy detestable customs. And now thou weenest that the sight of these hanged knights should fear me and make me aghast, nay truly not so, that shameful sight causeth me to have courage and hardiness against thee, more than I would have had against thee and if thou be a well-ruled knight.' 'Make thee ready,' said the red knight of the red lands, 'and talk no longer with me.' Then Sir Beaumains bade the damosel go from him, and then they put their spears in their rests, and came together with all the might they had, and either smote other in the midst of their shields, that the paytrels¹, surcingles², and cruppers brast, and fell both to the ground with the reins of their bridles in their hands, and so they lay a great while sore astonied, and all they that were in the castle and at the siege weened their necks had been broken, and then many a stranger and other said that the strange knight was a big man and a noble jouster, 'for or now we saw never no knight match the red knight of the red lands'; thus they said both within the castle and without. Then they lightly avoided their horses and put their shields afore them, and drew their swords and ran together like two fierce lions, and either gave other such buffets upon their helms that they reeled both backward two strides; and then they recovered both, and hewed great

¹ 'Breast-straps'.² 'Girths'.

pieces from their harness and their shields, that a great part fell in the fields.

XVIII

AND then the damosel Linet came unto Sir Beaumains, and unarmed him, and searched his wounds, and stinted his blood, and in likewise she did to the red knight of the red lands. And so they sojourned ten days in their tents. And the red knight made his lords and servants to do all the pleasure that they might unto Sir Beaumains. And within a while after, the red knight of the red lands went unto the castle and put him in the Lady Lyones' grace, and so she received him upon sufficient sureties, and all her hurts were well restored of all that she could complain. And then he departed and went unto the court of King Arthur, and there openly the red knight of the red lands put him in the mercy of Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawaine, and there he told openly how he was overcome, and by whom, and also he told of all the battles, from the beginning to the ending. 'Jesus, mercy,' said King Arthur and Sir Gawaine, 'we marvel much of what blood he is come, for he is a full noble knight.' 'Have ye no marvel,' said Sir Launcelot, 'for ye shall right well wit that he is come of a full noble blood, and as for his might and hardiness, there be but few now living that is so mighty as he is, and so noble of prowess.'

Thus endeth the history of Sir Gareth of Orkney, that wedded Dame Lyones of the Castle Perilous. And also Sir Gaheris wedded her sister Dame Linet, that was called the damosel savage. And Sir Agravaime wedded Dame Laurel, a fair lady. And great and mighty lands with great riches gave with them the noble King Arthur. that royally they might live unto their lives' end.

WILLIAM CAXTON (1422?—1491) was born in the Weald of Kent, and was probably a relation of the Causton (or Caxton) family which had property there. In 1438 he was apprenticed to Robert Large, mercer of London, and remained with him till 1446, when he set up business for himself in Bruges. He became a prosperous merchant, and in 1465 was appointed Governor of the Mercers' Company. Four years later, wishing to have more opportunity for literary work, he attached himself to the household of the English princess who had become Duchess of Burgundy. His first book, *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, was translated from the French between 1469 and 1471, and was printed by him at Bruges in 1474. Next year he printed, also at Bruges, *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, translated from a French version of Jean de Cessolis' *Ludus Schacchorum*. In 1476 he came to England, set up his press at Westminster, and between 1477 and 1491 printed over eighty works, many of them in folio. Among the most important of them are *The dictes and sayings of Philosophers* (1477), *The History of Jason* (1478), Cicero's *De Senectute* and *De Amicitia* (1481), *Reynard the Fox* (1481), *the Golden Legend* (1483), Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485), *the Paraphrase of the Aeneid* (from a French romance based on Virgil) (1490), together with editions of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, and a large collection of Horae and other service-books. He translated in all twenty-one works, twenty from the French and one (*Reynard the Fox*) from the Dutch. His three chief assistants, Wynkyn de Worde, Richard Pynson, and Robert Copland, are all famous in the history of printing.

FROM CAXTON'S PREFACE TO THE AENEID

AFTER diverse Works made, translated, and achieved, having no Work in hand, I sitting in my study whereas lay many diverse pamphlets and books, happened that to my hand came a little book in French, which late was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France, which book is named Eneidos, made in Latin by that noble poet and great clerk, Virgil, which book I saw over and read therein. . . .

In which book I had great pleasure because of the fair and honest terms and words in French, which I never saw to-fore like, nor none so pleasant nor so well ordered. . . .

And when I had advised me in this said book, I delibered and concluded to translate it into English. And forthwith took a pen and ink and wrote a leaf or twain, which I oversaw again to correct it. And when I saw the fair and strange terms therein, I doubted that it should not please some gentlemen which late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over curious terms which could not be understanden of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations. And fain would I satisfy every man, and so to do would take an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad that I could not well understand it. And also my lord Abbot of Westminster did do show to me late, certain evidences written in old English for to reduce it into our English now used. And certainly it was written in such wise that it was more like to Dutch than English, I could not reduce nor bring it to be understanden. And certainly our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born. For we Englishmen be born under the domination of the moon, which is never steadfast, but ever wavering—waxing o' one season, and waneth and decreaseth another season. And that common English that is spoken in one Shire varieth from another. In so much that in my days happened that certain merchants were in a ship in Thames, for to have sailed over the sea into Zeeland. And for lack of wind they tarried at Foreland, and went to land for to refresh them. And one of them, named Sheffield, a mercer, came into an house and axed for meat, and specially he axed after eggs. And the good wife answered that she could speak no

French. And the merchant was angry, for he also could speak no French, but would have had eggs, and she understood him not. And then, at last, another said that he would have eyren. Then the good wife said that she understood him well. Now, what should a man in these days now write; eggs or eyren? Certainly it is hard to please every man because of diversity and change of language. . . .

Some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find. And thus between plain, rude, and curious terms I stand abashed. But in my judgement the common terms that be daily used be lighter to be understanden than the old and ancient English. And for as much as this present book is not for a rude, uplandish man to labour therein, nor read it, but only for a clerk and noble gentleman that feeleth and understandeth in feats of arms, in love, and in noble chivalry, therefore in a mean between both I have reduced and translated this said book into our English, nor over rude nor curious, but in such terms as shall be understanden, by God's grace, according to my copy.

SIR THOMAS MORE (1478-1535). Born in London: educated first at St. Anthony's School, Threadneedle Street, on leaving which he entered the household of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who in 1497 sent him to Oxford. In 1499 he entered Parliament, and shortly after was made Under-Sheriff of London. The first book attributed to him, a *History of Edward V and Richard III*, said to have been written in 1513, is probably a translation of a Latin work by Cardinal Morton. In 1515-6 he wrote *Utopia*, first printed in Latin at Louvain (1516) under the editorship of Erasmus, whose acquaintance he made during his embassy to Brussels in this year. Of his other works the most famous are:—a *Dialogue against Tyndale touching the Pestilent Sect of Luther* (1529), the *Suppli-*

cation of Souls (1529), and the *Confutation of Tyndale* (1532). In 1530 he was made Lord Chancellor, but resigned the seals in 1533 over the question of Henry VIII's divorce. After this he fell into disfavour, and in 1535 he was beheaded for treason. An English translation of *Utopia* (by Ralph Robinson) was published in 1551: six years later appeared the first edition of the *History*, which had remained in MS. during More's lifetime. In the record of our literature his career has a threefold interest. He was one of the first great English scholars, the pupil of Linacre and Colet, the friend of Peter Giles and Erasmus, a notable pioneer in the renascence of Greek learning. In the religious movement of his time he bore an important part; and he paid with his life a refusal to acknowledge Henry VIII's supremacy over the Church. His *Utopia*, from which the following extract is taken, is one of the most famous works on Political Philosophy in our language: a sketch of an ideal commonwealth, following remotely the lines of Plato's *Republic*, but more closely the forerunner of such books as Bacon's *New Atlantis* and Campanella's *City of the Sun*. The descriptions are so vivid that the island, in spite of its name, was for many years believed to have a real existence: and it is included (though with some misgivings) by Peter Heylin in his account of *Terra Australis Incognita*.

OF SCIENCES, CRAFTS, AND OCCUPATIONS

(From *Utopia*)

HUSBANDRY is a Science common to them all in general, both men and women, wherein they be all expert and cunning. In this they be all instruct even from their youth: partly in their schools with traditions and precepts, and partly in the country nigh the city, being brought up as it were in playing, not only beholding the use of it, but by occasion of exercising their bodies practising it also. Besides husbandry, which (as I said) is common to them all, every one of them learneth one or other several and particular sciences as his own proper craft. That is most commonly either clothworking in

wool or flax, or masonry, or the smith's craft, or the carpenter's science. For there is none other occupation that any number to speak of doth use there. For their garments, which throughout all the Island be of one fashion (save that there is a difference between the man's garment and the woman's, between the married and the unmarried), and this one continueth for evermore unchanged, seemly and comely to the eye, no let to the moving and wielding of the body, also fit both for winter and summer; as for these garments (I say) every family maketh their own. But of the other foresaid crafts every man learneth one. And not only the men but also the women. But the women, as the weaker sort, be put to the easier crafts, as to work wool and flax. The more labour-some sciences be committed to the men. For the most part every man is brought up in his father's craft. For most commonly they be naturally thereto bent and inclined. But if a man's mind stand to any other, he is by adoption put into a family of that occupation which he doth most fantasy. Whom not only his father, but also the magistrates do diligently look to, that he be put to a discreet and an honest householder. Yea, and if any person, when he hath learned one craft, be desirous to learn also another, he is likewise suffered and permitted.

When he hath learned both he occupieth whether he will: unless the city have more need of the one than of the other. The chief and almost the only office of the Syphogrants¹ is to see and take heed that no man sit idle; but every one apply his own craft with earnest diligence. And yet for all that not to be wearied from early in the morning to late in the evening with continual work, like labouring and toiling beasts.

For this is worse than the miserable and wretched

¹ More's name for the Magistrates of Utopia.

condition of bondmen. Which nevertheless is almost everywhere the life of workmen and artificers saving in Utopia. For they dividing the day and the night into *xxiiij* just hours, appoint and assign only six of those hours to work before noon, upon which they go straight to dinner: and after dinner, when they have rested two hours, then they work *iiij* hours, and upon that they go to supper. About eight of the clock in the evening (counting one of the clock at the first hour after noon) they go to bed: eight hours they give to sleep. All the void time, that is between the hours of work, sleep, and meat, that they be suffered to bestow, every man as he liketh best himself. Not to the intent that they should mis-spend this time in riot or slothfulness, but being then licensed from the labour of their own occupation to bestow the time well and thriftily upon some other science as shall please them. For it is a solemn custom there to have lectures daily, early in the morning, where to be present they only be constrained that be namely chosen and appointed to learning. Howbeit a great multitude of every sort of people, both men and women, go to hear lectures, some one and some another as every man's nature is inclined. Yet this notwithstanding, if any man rather bestow this time upon his own occupation (as it chanceth in many, whose minds rise not to the contemplation of any science liberal) he is not letted nor prohibited but is also praised and commended as profitable to the commonwealth. After supper they bestow one hour in play: in summer in their gardens; in winter in their common halls, where they dine and sup. There they exercise themselves in music or else in honest and wholesome communication. Dice-play and such other foolish and pernicious games, they know not. But they use *ij* games not much unlike the chess. The one is the

battle of numbers, wherein one number stealeth away another. The other is wherein vices fight with virtues as it were in battle array, or a set field. In the which game is very properly showed both the strife and discord that vices have among themselves and again their unity and concord against virtue; and also what vices be repugnant to what virtues; with what power and strength they assail them openly; by what wiles and subtlety they assault them secretly; with what help and aid the virtues resist and overcome the puissance of the vices; by what craft they frustrate their purposes; and finally by what sleight or means the one getteth the victory.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REVOLT AGAINST POETIC CONVENTION

THREE times at least, in the history of English literature, has poetry flourished from a prosaic and unpromising soil. Our thirteenth-century lyrics blossomed under an almost impenetrable thicket of homilies and chronicles: our eighteenth-century Age of Reason was also the age of Blake and Burns: midway between them, among the elaborate and conventional moralities of our dullest period, a few native wild-flowers sprang up into spontaneous growth. Lydgate and Occleve had overspread the early half of the fifteenth century with an established method and an established range of topics: with heroic subjects treated in an unheroic manner: with long records in which every tale becomes a sermon and every text is half-obliterated by its commentary. Another step and they would have anticipated Molière's valet, who turned the history of Rome into madrigals. But during the next generation this danger was averted: poetry once more shook off its court-trappings and its embroidered uniform, and recovered, if not grace of movement, at any rate freedom and unconstraint.

The value of Skelton's work is a matter of conflicting opinion. Some critics have decried him; others, like Lowell, have hailed him as our only fifteenth-century poet. On one point, however, there can be no dispute: that among all mediaeval writers of English verse he was the least conventional. Nothing can be less like the sedate and decorous metres of the time than the vivid breathless doggerel—itself a sort of inspiration—which he seems to have invented, and which at least he habitually employed.

In his satires on Wolsey the lines tumble and leap and play a thousand antics: their very sound is a gibe; their rhymes, more audacious than any before *Hudibras*, hit the ear like the crack of a whip. In *Philip Sparrow* they are direct, concise, playful, wholly without dignity but extraordinarily rapid and alert: in *Merry Margaret*, where for once he has a real touch of beauty both in thought and rhythm, they eddy like a shallow stream over pebbles. And as his form, so his range of ideas. He cares nothing for paladins and champions, or for the disasters of illustrious men, or (except in one official work) for the training and education of princes: he paints what he sees before him—the humours of the village ale-house, the rogues who invaded his churchyard, the commonplaces of daily life and ordinary people, described in a tone of rough and vigorous humour which, with more genius, might be compared to a tavern-interior of Jan Steen. He has an interest, too, as one of the first among our literary critics. The lines on Chaucer, on Gower, and on Lydgate, which appear in the latter part of our extract from *Philip Sparrow*, show a just sense of appreciation, and—unlike much literary criticism—waste no words in expressing it.

Of Skelton's contemporaries the most important was the Scottish poet William Dunbar. He is a writer of very unequal merit: his two longest poems, the *Thistle and the Rose* (1503) and *The Golden Targe* (1508), are little more than imitations of Chaucer, interspersed with a few passages of brilliant description and of genuine national feeling. But in his humorous verses, in his wild pageant of *The Seven Deadly Sins*¹ and in his elegiac

¹ An excerpt from this poem is given in Professor Morley's *Shorter English Poems* (Cassell's Library of English Literature), pp. 113-6. It is omitted from the present volume because of the difficulty of its dialect.

Lament for the Makers, he touches a wide range of emotion, broad fun, and pathos, and a horror as sinister as that of Holbein's *Dance of Death*, which raise him far above the level of discipleship. With him may be mentioned Gawin Douglas, the scholarly Bishop of Dunkeld, who translated Ovid and Virgil, and who depicted his native landscape with a fidelity not surpassed until the days of his countryman Thomson.

But in the scale of absolute value all these are insignificant beside the ballads which, at this time, come into the currency of English literature. It is impossible to date them with any precision, since they passed from hand to hand for centuries before they were collected and edited by scholars like Ramsay and Bishop Percy: *Robin Hood* seems to have been known in 1370; *Chevy Chase*, which stirred Sidney 'like the sound of a trumpet', belongs in all probability to the century after; and about the same time may be placed *Sir Patrick Spens*, the *Nut-brown Maid*, *Edom o' Gordon*, and many others of a like immortality. As a rule, the Scottish ballads are far more imaginative and poetic than the English. On the southern side of the border the subject was all-important—a rousing story, a tragic event, a crisis of romantic feeling: and the verse, as in the example from *Robin Hood* here quoted, was satisfied with bald rhythm and simple narration. On the northern side the main issue is heightened with a hundred dramatic touches—the ominous moon in *Sir Patrick Spens*, the treacherous servant in *Edom o' Gordon*, the accumulated horrors of *Edward*, the grim funeral movement of the *Lyke Wake Dirge*. Yet each had its own character and its own qualities. The simplicity and restraint of English song afforded a stock on which, in times to come, should be grafted the more subtle and penetrating fancy of its neighbouring lands: and from the union of the two there

sprang a poetry which in depth, in force, in command of human emotion, was rivalled only by the combined Slav and Teutonic elements of German art.

JOHN SKELTON (1460 ?-1529) was probably a native of Norfolk, and was educated both at Cambridge and at Oxford. Caxton, in his preface to the *Aeneid*, speaks of him as 'late created poet laureate at the University of Oxford', and mentions the translations which he made there of Cicero's *Letters* and of the *History* of Diodorus Siculus. In 1483 he wrote a poem on the death of Edward IV, and for several years afterwards composed occasional pieces with a view to court patronage. Before 1500 he was appointed tutor to Prince Henry (Henry VIII), for whom he wrote the *Speculum Principis*; and Erasmus, in the dedication of *De Laudibus Britanniae*, speaks of him with respect as a member of the Prince's household. In 1498 he took Holy Orders, and in 1504 was Parson of Diss in Norfolk, a benefice which he held until his death. From this time begin the poems in the famous short metre which is usually associated with his name. One of the earliest was the *Boke of Philip Sparrow*; others followed of a character sufficiently indicated by Wood's phrase that he was 'more fitted for the stage than for the pew or pulpit'. He was a vehement political opponent of Wolsey, whom he mercilessly satirized in the pasquinades *Colin Clout*, *Why come ye not to Court*, and *Speke, Parrot*. Three morality plays are assigned to him, of which only one, the *Magnificens*, survives. His *Balade of the Scotyshe Kinge*, exulting over the victory at Flodden (1513), is one of the earliest English ballads. Many of his poems were printed by Wynkyn de Worde.

FROM 'THE BOOK OF PHILIP SPARROW'

WHEN I remember again
How my Philip was slain,
Never half the pain
Was between you twain,
Pyramus and Thisbe,
As then befell to me:
I wept and I wailed,

The tears down hailed ;
But nothing it availed
To call Philip again, 10
Whom Gib our cat hath slain.

.
To weep with me look that ye come
All manner of birds in your kind ;
See none be left behind.
To mourning look that ye fall
With dolorous songs funeral,
Some to sing and some to say,
Some to weep and some to pray,
Every bird in his lay.
The goldfinch, the wagtail, 20
The jangling jay to rail,
The flecked pie to chatter
Of this dolorous matter. . . .
The owl that is so foul
He shall help us to howl ;
The heron so gaunt,
And the cormorant,
With the pheasant,
And the gagging gaunt¹,
The barnacle, the buzzard, 30
With the wild mallard,
The diverdop² to sleep,
The water hen to weep :
The puffin and the teal
Money they shall deal
To poor folk at large,
This shall be their charge :
The seamew and the titmouse,
The woodcock with the long nose,

¹ 'Gannet'.² 'Dabchick'.

The throstle with her warbling, 40
The starling with her brabbling,
The rook, with the osprey
That putteth fishes in a fray,
And the dainty curlew,
With the turtle most true.

For, as I tofore have said,
I am but a young maid,
And cannot in effect
My style as yet direct
With English words elect : 50
Our natural tongue is rude,
And hard to be ennewed¹
With polished terms lusty ;
Our language is so rusty,
So cankered, and so full
Of frowards, and so dull,
That if I would apply
To write ornately,
I wot not where to find
Terms to serve my mind. 60
Gower's English is old,
And of no value told ;
His matter is worth gold,
And worthy to be enrolled.
In Chaucer I am sped,
His tales I have read :
His matter is delectable,
Solacious² and commendable ;
His English well allowed,
So as it is enprowed³, 70

¹ 'Painted', or 'adorned'.

² 'Amusing'.

³ 'Improved'.

For as it is employed,
There is no English void,
At those days much commended,
And now men would have amended
His English wherewith they bark,
And mar all they wark :
Chaucer, that famous clerk,
His terms were not dark,
But pleasant easy and plain ;
No word he wrote in vain.

80

Also John Lydgate
Writeth after an higher rate ;
It is diffuse¹ to find
The sentence of his mind,
Yet writeth he is in kind,
No man that can amend
Those matters that he hath penned ;
Yet some men find a fault,
And say he writeth too haut².

90

Wherefore hold me excused
If I have not well perused
Mine English half abused ;
Though it be refused,
In worth I shall it take,
And fewer words make.
But for my sparrow's sake,
Yet, as a woman may,
My wit I shall essay
An epitaph to write
In Latin plain and light,
Whereof the Elegy
Followeth by and by.

100

¹ 'Difficult'.² 'Lofty'.

TO MISTRESS MARGARET HUSSEY

(From *The Garland of Laurell*)

MERRY Margaret

As midsummer flower,

Gentle as falcon

Or hawk of the tower:

With solace and gladness,

Much mirth and no madness,

All good and no badness ;

So joyously,

So maidenly,

So womanly

10

Her demeaning

In every thing,

Far far passing

That I can indite,

Or suffice to write

Of merry Margaret,

As midsummer flower,

Gentle as falcon

Or hawk of the tower.

As patient and still

20

And as full of good-will

As fair Isaphill,

Coliander,

Sweet pomander,

Good Cassander¹ ;

Steadfast of thought,

¹ These allusions have more rhyme than reason. It is conjectured that 'Isaphill' is Hypsipyle, the queen of Lemnos, who saved her father's life in a massacre, and that 'Cassander' is Cassandra, daughter of Priam. A 'pomander' is a ball of perfume. 'Coliander' is probably for 'coriander', a medicinal plant, to the seeds of which manna is compared in Exodus xiii. 31.

Well-made, well-wrought,
 Far may be sought
 Ere that ye can find
 So courteous, so kind 20
 As merry Margaret,
 This midsummer flower,
 Gentle as falcon
 Or hawk of the tower.

BALLADS

SIR PATRICK SPENS

THE king sits in Dunfermline toun,
 Drinking the blude-red wine;
 'O whaur will I get a skeely¹ skipper,
 To sail this ship o' mine?'

Then up and spake an eldern knight
 Sat at the king's right knee:
 'Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
 That ever sail'd the sea.'

The king has written a braid letter,
 And seal'd it wi' his hand, 10
 And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens
 Was walking on the strand.'

'To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway owre the faem;
 The king's daughter to Noroway,
 'Tis thou maun tak her hame.'

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
 A loud laugh laughèd he;
 The neist line that Sir Patrick read,
 The tear blindit his ee. 20

¹ 'Skilful'.

'O wha is this has done this deed,
Has tauld the king o' me,
To send us out at this time o' the year
To sail upon the sea?

'Be 't wind or weet, be 't hail or sleet,
Our ship maun sail the faem;
The king's daughter to Noroway,
'Tis we maun tak her hame.'

They hoisted their sails on Monenday morn,
Wi' a' the haste they may; 30
And they hae landed in Noroway
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week,
In Noroway but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say—

'Ye Scotismen spend a' our king's gowd,
And a' our queenis fee.'
'Ye lee, ye lee, ye leears loud,
Sae loud's I hear ye lee! 40

'For I brought as much o' the white monie
As gane¹ my men and me,
And a half-fou² o' the gude red gowd,
Out owre the sea with me.

'Mak ready, mak ready, my merry men a',
Our gude ship sails the morn.'
'Now ever alake, my master dear,
I fear a deidly storm.

'I saw the new moon late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm; 50

¹ 'Suffice'.

² An old Scots measure (about half a bushel).

And if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm !'

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift¹ grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the tap-masts lap,
It was sic a deidly storm ;
And the waves cam owre the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

60

'O whaur will I get a gude sailor
Will tak the helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall tap-mast,
To see if I can spy land.'

'O here am I, a sailor gude,
To tak the helm in hand,
Till ye get up to the tall tap-mast—
But I fear ye'll ne'er spy land.'

He hadna gane a step, a step,
A step but barely ane,
When a bout² flew out o' the gude ship's side,
And the saut sea it cam in.

70

'Gae, fetch a wab o' the silken claith,
Anither o' the twine,
And wap³ them into our gude ship's side,
And let na the sea come in.'

They fetch'd a wab o' the silken claith,
Anither o' the twine⁴,
And they wapp'd them into the gude ship's side,
But aye the sea cam in.

80

¹ 'Sky'. ² Probably 'bolt' (Scott says that it 'ought to mean a plank'). ³ 'Stuff' (lit. 'wrap'). ⁴ i. e. coarse cloth.

O laith, laith were our Scots lords' sons
To weet their coal-black shoon,
But lang ere a' the play was owre,
They wat their hats abune.

And mony was the feather-bed
That fluttered on the faem,
And mony was the gude lord's son
That never mair cam hame.

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand, 90
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand.

And lang, lang may the maidens sit,
Wi' the gowd kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves,
For them they'll see nae mair.

O forty miles off Aberdeen
It's fifty fathom deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet. 100

CHEVY CHASE; OR, THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT

THE FIRST FYTTE

THE Percy out of Northumberland,
And a vow to God made he,
That he would hunt in the mountains
At Cheviot within days three,
In the maugre of doughty Douglas,
And all that ever with him be.

The fattest harts in all Cheviot,
 He said he would kill and carry them away :
 'By my faith,' said the doughty Douglas again,
 'I will let that hunting if that I may.' 10

Then the Percy out of Bamborough cam,
 With him a mighty meany¹ ;
 With fifteen hundred archers bold,
 They were chosen out of shires three.

This began on a Monday at morn,
 In Cheviot the hills so high :
 The child may rue that is unborn,
 It was the more pity.

The drivers through the woods went
 For to raise the deer ; 20
 Bowmen bickert upon the bent²
 With their broad arrows clear.

Then the wild [deer] through the woods went
 On every side sheer ;
 Greyhounds through the groves glent³
 For to kill their deer.

They began in Cheviot the hills above
 Early on a Monanday ;
 By that it drew to the hour of noon
 A hundred fat harts dead there lay. 30

They blew a mort⁴ upon the bent,
 They 'sembled on sides sheer ;
 To the quarry⁵ then the Percy went,
 To see the brittling⁶ of the deer.

He said, 'It was the Douglas promise
 This day to meet me here ;

¹ 'Troop'. ² i.e. skirmished over the grass. ³ 'Flashed'
⁴ i.e. for the death of the deer. ⁵ 'Prey'. ⁶ 'Dividing'.

But I wist he would fail verament';
A great oath the Percy swear.
At last a squire of Northumberland
Look'd at his hand full nigh; 40
He was 'ware o' the doughty Douglas coming,
With him a mighty meany,
Both with spear, bill, and brand.
It was a mighty sight to see;
Hardier men, both of heart nor hand,
Were not in Christianity.
They were twenty hundred spearmen good,
Withouten any fail;
They were born along by the water of Tweed,
In the bounds of Teviotdale. 50
'Leave off the brittling of the deer,' he said,
'And to your bows look ye tak good heed;
For sith ye were o' your mothers born,
Had ye never so mickle need.'
The doughty Douglas on a steed
He rode at his men beforne;
His armour glitter'd as did a glede¹;
A bolder baron was never born.
'Tell me what men ye are,' he says,
'Or whose men that ye be; 60
Who gave you leave to hunt in this
Cheviot chase in the spite of me?'
The first man that ever him an answer made,
It was the good Lord Percy;
'We will not tell thee what men we are,' he says,
'Nor whose men that we be;
But we will hunt here in this chase
In spite of thine and of thee.'
¹ 'Hot coal',

'The fattest harts in all Cheviot
We have kill'd, and cast to carry them away.' 70
'By my troth,' said the doughty Douglas again,
'Therefore the one of us shall dee this day.'

Then said the doughty Douglas
Unto the Lord Percy :
'To kill all these guiltless men,
Alas ! it were great pity.

'But, Percy, thou art a lord of land,
I am an earl call'd within my country ;
Let all our men upon a parti stand¹,
And do the battle of thee and of me.' 80

'Now Christ's curse on his crown,' said the Lord Percy,
'Whosoever thereto says nay.
By my troth, doughty Douglas,' he says,
'Thou shalt never see that day ;

'Neither in England, Scotland, nor France,
Nor for no man of a woman born,
But and fortune be my chance,
I dare meet him one man for one.'

Then bespake a squire of Northumberland,
Richard Witherington was his name : 90
'It shall never be told in South-England,' he says,
'To King Harry the Fourth for shame.

'I wot ye be great lords twa,
I am a poor squire of land ;
I will never see my captain fight on a field,
And stand myself, and look on :
But while I may my weapon wield,
I will fight both heart and hand.'

¹ i. e. stand apart.

That day, that day, that dreadful day:

The first fyte here I find ¹, 100

An you will hear any more o' the hunting o' the
Cheviot,

Yet is there more behind.

THE SECOND FYTTE

The Englishmen had their bows bent,

Their hearts were good enow ;

The first of arrows that they shot off,

Seven score spearmen they slew.

Yet bides the Earl Douglas upon the bent,

A captain good enough ;

And that was seen verament,

For he wrought them both woe and wough². 110

The Douglas parted his host in three,

Like a chief chieftain of pride ;

With sure spears of mighty tree

They come in on every side.

Thorough our English archery

Gave many a wound full wide ;

Many a doughty they garred to die,

Which gained them no pride.

The Englishmen let their bows be,

And pull'd out brands that were bright ; 120

It was a heavy sight to see,

Bright swords on basenets³ light.

Thorough rich mail, and manople⁴,

Many stern they stroke down straight ;

Many a freke⁵, that was full free,

There under foot did light.

¹ 'Finish'.

² 'Evil'.

³ 'Helmets'.

⁴ 'Gauntlet'.

⁵ 'Warrior'.

At last the Douglas and the Percy met,
Like to captains of might and main ;
They swapt¹ together till they both swat,
With swords that were of fine Milain². 130

These worthy frekes for to fight
Thereto they were full fain,
Till the blood out of their basenets sprent³,
As ever did hail or rain.

'Hold thee, Percy,' said the Douglas,
'And i' faith I shall thee bring
Where thou shalt have an earl's wages
Of Jamie, our Scottish king.

'Thou shalt have thy ransom free,
I hight thee hear this thing, 140
For the manfullest man yet art thou
That ever I conquer'd in field fighting.'

'Nay then,' said the Lord Percy,
'I told it thee beforne,
That I would never yielded be
To no man of a woman born.'

With that there came an arrow hastily
Forth of a mighty wone⁴,
It hath stricken the Earl Douglas
In at the breast-bone. 150

Thorough liver and lungs both
The sharp arrow is gone,
That never after in all his life days
He spake mo words but one,
That was, 'Fight ye, my merry men, whiles ye may,
For my life days be gone.'

¹ 'Dashed'. ² i. e. Milan steel. ³ 'Spurtd'. ⁴ 'Multitude'.

The Percy leaned on his hand,
And saw the Douglas dee ;
He took the dead man by the hand,
And said, ' Woe is me for thee !' 160

' To have saved thy life I would have parted with
My lands for years three,
For a better man of heart, nor of hand,
Was not in all the north country.'

Of all that see, a Scottish knight,
Was call'd Sir Hugh the Montgomerie,
He saw the Douglas to the death was dight,
He spende a spear of a trusty tree.

He rode upon a courser
Through a hundred archery ; 170
He never stinted, nor never blave¹,
Till he came to the good Lord Percy.

He set upon the Lord Percy
A dint that was full sore ;
With a sure spear of a mighty tree
Clean thorough the body he the Percy bore,

At the tother side, that a man might see
A large cloth-yard and mair ;
Two better captains were not in Christianty,
Than that day slain were there. 180

An archer of Northumberland,
Saw slain was the Lord Percy,
He bare a bent bow in his hand,
Was made of a trusty tree ;

An arrow, that a cloth-yard was long,
To the hard steel haled he ;
A dint that was both sad and sore,
He set on Sir Hugh the Montgomerie.

¹ 'Stayed'.

The dint it was both sad and sair
 That he on Montgomerie set ; 190
 The swan-feathers that his arrows bare,
 With his heart blood they were wet.
 There was never a freke one foot would flee,
 But still in stour¹ did stand,
 Hewing on each other while they might dree²,
 With many a baleful brand.
 This battle began in Cheviot
 An hour before the noon,
 And when even-song bell was rung
 The battle was not half done. 200
 They took on, on either hand
 By the light of the moon ;
 Many had no strength for to stand,
 In Cheviot the hills aboon.
 Of fifteen hundred archers of England,
 Went away but fifty and three ;
 Of twenty hundred spearmen of Scotland
 But even five and fifty :
 But all were slain Cheviot within ;
 They had no strength to stand on high ; 210
 The child may rue that is unborn,
 It was the more pity.
 There was slain with the Lord Percy,
 Sir John of Agerstone,
 Sir Roger the hinde³ Hartly,
 Sir William the bold Heron.
 Sir George the worthy Lumley,
 A knight of great renown,
 Sir Ralph the rich Rugby,
 With dints were beaten down. 220
¹ 'Battle'. ² 'Endure'. ³ 'Courteous'.

For Witherington my heart was woe,

That ever he slain should be ;

For when both his legs were hewn in two,

Yet he kneel'd and fought on his knee.

There was slain with the doughty Douglas,

Sir Hugh the Montgomerie,

Sir Davy Liddle, that worthy was,

His sister's son was he ;

Sir Charles a Murray, in that place,

That never a foot would flee ;

230

Sir Hugh Maxwell, a lord he was,

With the Douglas did he dee.

So on the morrow they made them biers

Of birch and hazel so gray ;

Many widows with weeping tears

Came to fetch their maiks¹ away.

Teviotdale may carp of care,

Northumberland may make great moan,

For two such captains as slain were there,

On the march parti² shall never be none.

240

Word is come to Edinborough,

To Jamie, the Scottish king,

That doughty Douglas, Lieutenant of the Marches,

He lay slain Cheviot within.

His hands did he weal³ and wring.

He said, ' Alas ! and woe is me !

Such another captain Scotland within,'

He said, ' i' faith shall never be.'

Word is come to lovely London,

To the Fourth Harry our king,

250

That Lord Percy, Lieutenant of the Marches,

He lay slain Cheviot within.

¹ 'Husbands': see n. 6, p. 80. ² i. e. the border side. ³ 'Twist'.

'God have mercy on his soul !' said King Harry,
 'Good Lord, if Thy will it be !
 I have a hundred captains in England,' he said,
 'As good as ever was he ;
 But Percy, an I brook my life,
 Thy death well quit shall be.'

As our noble king made his a-vow,
 Like a noble prince of renown, 260
 For the death of the Lord Percy
 He did the battle of Humbledon¹ ;

Where six and thirty Scottish knights
 On a day were beaten down :
 Glendale glitter'd in their armour bright,
 Over castle, tower, and town.

This was the hunting of the Cheviot,
 That tear began this spurn² ;
 Old men that knowen the ground well enough
 Call it the battle of Otterburn. 270

At Otterburn began this spurn,
 Upon a Monanday ;
 There was the doughty Douglas slain,
 The Percy never went away.

There was never a time on the march parti
 Since the Douglas and Percy met,
 But it was marvel an the red blood ran not,
 As the rain does in the street.

Jesu Christ our bales bete³,
 And to the bliss us bring ! 280

Thus was the hunting of the Cheviot ;
 God send us all good ending.

¹ i.e. Hamildon, where the Scots were defeated, Sept. 14, 1402.

² A proverb of retaliation. ³ 'Heal our ills' (for 'bete' see *Sir Cleges*, l. 271).

ROBIN HOOD

THE SEVENTH FYTTE

THE king came to Nottingham,
 With knights in great array,
 For to take that gentle knight,
 And Robin Hood, if he may.

Half a year dwelled our comely king,
 In Nottingham, and well more,
 Could he not hear of Robin Hood,
 In what country that he were ;
 But alway went good Robin
 By halk ¹ and eke by hill,
 And alway slew the king's deer,
 And welt them ² at his will.

10

Than bespake a proud forster,
 That stood by our king's knee,
 'If ye will see good Robin,
 Ye must do after me.
 Take five of the best knights
 That be in your lead,
 And walk down by your abbey,
 And get you monk's weed.

20

'And I will be your leadsman,
 And lead you the way,
 And ere ye come to Nottingham,
 Mine head then dare I lay,
 That ye shall meet with good Robin,
 Alive if that he be,
 Ere ye come to Nottingham,
 With eyes ye shall him see.'

¹ 'Enclosure'. ² 'Brought them down'.

Full hastily our king was dight,
So were his knights five, 30
Each of them in monk's weed,
And hasted them thither blithe.
Our king was great above his cowl,
A broad hat on his crown,
Right as he were abbot-like,
They rode up in-to the town.
Stiff boots our king had on,
Forsooth as I you say,
He rode singing to green wood,
The convent was clothed in gray, 40
His mail horse, and his great somers¹,
Followed our king behind,
Till they came to green wood,
A mile under the lind²:
There they met with good Robin,
Standing on the way,
And so did many a bold archer,
For sooth as I you say.
Robin took the king's horse,
Hastily in that stead, 50
And said, 'Sir abbot, by your leave,
A while ye must abide;
We be yeomen of this forest,
Under the green wood tree,
We live by our king's deer,
Other shift have not we;
And ye have churches and rents both,
And gold full great plenty;
Give us some of your spending,
For saint Charity.' 60

¹ 'Sumter horses'.² Norse word for 'trees'

Than bespake our comely king,
 Anon then said he,
 'I brought no more to green wood,
 But forty pound with me.
 I have lain at Nottingham,
 This fortnight with our king,
 And spent I have full much good,
 On many a great lording ;
 And I have but forty pound,
 No more then have I me ;
 But if I had an hundred pound,
 I would give it to thee.'

70

Robin took the forty pound,
 And departed it in two partye,
 Halfendell¹ he gave his merry men,
 And bade them merry to be.
 Full courteously Robin gan say,
 'Sir, have this for your spending,
 We shall meet another day.'
 'Gramercy,' then said our king,

80

'But well thee greeteth Edward our king,
 And sent to thee his seal,
 And biddeth thee come to Nottingham,
 Both to meat and meal.'
 He took out the broad tarpe²,
 And soon he let him see ;
 Robin coud³ his courtesy,
 And set him on his knee :
 'I love no man in all the world
 So well as I do my king,

90

¹ 'The half part'.² Probably for 'targe', the king's seal.³ 'Remembered' (lit. 'knew').

Welcome is my lord's seal;
 And, monk, for thy tiding,
 Sir abbot, for thy tidings,
 To-day thou shalt dine with me,
 For the love of my king,
 Under my trystel tree.'

Full hastily was their dinner idight,
 And therto gan they gon,
 They served our king with all their might,
 Both Robin and Little John. 100
 Anon before our king was set
 The fat venison,
 The good white bread, the good red wine,
 And thereto the fine ale brown.

'Make good cheer,' said Robin,
 'Abbot, for charity;
 And for this ilke tiding,
 Blessed mote thou be.
 Now shalt thou see what life we lead,
 Or thou hennes¹ wend, 110
 Then thou may inform our king,
 When ye together lend.'

Up they started all in haste,
 Their bows were smartly bent,
 Our king was never so sore aghast,
 He weened to have be shent².
 Two yards there were up set,
 Thereto gan they gang;
 But fifty pace, our king said,
 The marks were too long. 120

¹ 'Hence'.

² Cf. n. 1, p. 174.

On every side a rose garland,
They shot under the line.

‘Whoso faileth of the rose garland,’ said Robin,
‘His tackle he shall tine¹,
And yield it to his master,
Be it never so fine,—
(For no man will I spare,
So drink I ale or wine)—
And bear a buffet on his head,
I-wys right all bare.’

130

And all that fell in Robin’s lot
He smote them wonder sair.
Twice Robin shot about,
And ever he cleaved the wand,
And so did good Gilbert,
With the lily-white hand;
Little John and good Scathelock,
For nothing would they spare,
When they failed of the garland,
Robin smote them full sair.

140

At the last shot that Robin shot,
For all his friends fair,
Yet he failed of the garland,
Three fingers and mair.
Then bespake good Gilbert,
And thus he gan say,
‘Master,’ he said, ‘your tackle is lost;
Stand forth and take your pay.’
‘If it be so,’ said Robin,
‘That may no better be:
Sir abbot, I deliver thee mine arrow,
I pray thee, sir, serve thou me.’

150

¹ ‘Forfeit’.

'It falleth not for mine order,' said our king,

'Robin, by thy leave,

For to smite no good yeoman,

For doubt I should him grieve.'

'Smite on boldly!' said Robin,

'I give thee large leave.'

Anon our king, with that word,

He folded up his sleeve,

160

And such a buffet he gave Robin,

To ground he yede full near.

'I make mine avow,' said Robin,

'Thou art a stalworthy frere¹;

There is pith in thine arm,' said Robin,

'I trow thou canst well shoot!'

Thus our king and Robin Hood

Together then they met.

Robin beheld our comely king

Wistly² in the face,

170

So did Sir Richard at the Lee,

And kneeled down in that place ;

And so did all the wild outlaws,

When they see them kneel.

'My lord the King of England,

Now I know you well.

Mercy,' then Robin said to our king,

'Under your trystel tree,

Of thy goodness and thy grace,

For my men and me!'

180

'Yes, fore God,' then said our king,

'Thy petition I grant thee,

With³ that thou leave the green wood,

And all thy company ;

¹ 'Friar'.

² 'Carefully'.

³ 'On condition'.

And come home, sir, to my court,
And there dwell with me.'

'I make mine avow,' said Robin,
'And right so shall it be ;

I will come to your court,

Your service for to see,

130

And bring with me of my men

Seven score and three.

But me like¹ well your service,

I come again full soon,

And shoot at the donne² deer,

As I am wont to door.'

¹ 'Unless I like'.

² 'Fallow'.

CHAPTER IX

INFLUENCE OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

From the time of our later Plantagenet to that of our Tudor kings the relation between Italy and England was close and continuous. Its basis was largely mercantile: the English noble bought his silks from an Italian loom, and his chain from an Italian goldsmith: Venetian coinage so overran London that in 1409 its use had to be prohibited by Act of Parliament: many of the bow-staves which helped to win our victory at Agincourt were landed at Southampton from Venetian galleys. But it was by no means restricted to commerce. Cook and Hawkwood (the latter of whom is buried in the Cathedral at Florence) were among the most famous of Italian condottieri; Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, held, during the Wars of the Roses, a professorial chair at the University of Padua; 'Thomas of England' was Rector of that University in 1481. With Venice in particular we had a long tradition of diplomatic and political intercourse: the first congratulations which Henry VII received after Bosworth came from the Doge Barberigo; the best account of English society in his successor's reign is given by the letters and dispatches of Giustinian; and the alliance which this implied goes back at least as far as the mission of Carlo Zeno to the court of Richard II.

It must be confessed that in Literature the debt lay all upon one side. Our Italian visitors acquired little familiarity with the English language; our fifteenth-century poets were not very attractive to a foreign reader. Indeed, Giustinian makes no

mention of any English authors except More and Hall; his contemporaries and countrymen, without exception, are equally reticent; and the most careful research can find nothing more flattering to our national pride than an adaptation of *Sir Bevis of Hampton* for the marionette stage. But if we gave little we gained much. The influence of Italy had been gathering ever since Chaucer learned from it the measure and cadence of heroic verse: in the sixteenth century it became for a time paramount, and affected not only the style of English poetry but its most intimate recesses of thought and feeling.

The three poets in whom this is most apparent are Wyatt, Surrey, and Sackville. They were all men of noble birth and of courtly education, refined and cultivated, taking up poetry more as a dilettante accomplishment than as the pursuit of a lifetime, yet within their limitations true and genuine artists. Wyatt has all the best and worst qualities of the amateur—a real love of beauty often struggling with imperfect expression, tenderness, freshness, spontaneity marred by a lack of power and concentration, now a careless or halting rhythm, now an inspired line or a perfect stanza. The flexibility of metre which critics have noted in his writing seems almost as much due to an inaccurate ear as to a designed variety: at any rate it is often unsuccessful, and it often carries with it other defects of workmanship. But at his best he is exquisitely musical, and throughout he shows a depth and a personality of feeling which outmatch anything in the character of the other two. Surrey is a more even artist, but a poet of less inspiration. The *Geraldine* sonnets, beside Wyatt's love-poems, are slight and artificial: exercises in the fashionable taste by a skilled craftsman who took nothing, not even his skill, very seriously. The verses on *Morning*, here quoted, are fresh and graceful, but in them, as in the more

reflective poems, we may find a touch of complacency, as though the poet said, 'See how easy all this is when a person of quality takes it in hand.' There is, in short, something of Byron's attitude towards his craft—though without Byron's titanic force—and it is interesting to trace in the two men some evidences of the same petulance, and of the same sardonic humour. Sackville represents a third side of this aristocratic temperament. He has neither the tender chivalry of Wyatt nor the somewhat disdainful cleverness of Surrey; from the first his music has a note of dignity and gravity befitting one who was afterwards to take high rank in the counsels of the nation. His very choice of a leader is significant. The *Induction* is the one considerable English poem which is saturated throughout with the influence of Dante: it borrows from the *Inferno* its plan, its treatment, much of its imagery, nearly everything indeed except its allegorical manner: it follows its august guide on a level of uniform talent which never rises to genius or sinks to commonplace. Its interest to the student of English literature is not confined within the limitations of its intrinsic merit; and we owe more than a passing attention to the poem which caught some far-off echoes of the great Florentine and carried them, dimmed but not degraded, to the reawakening imagination of Spenser.

Upon Wyatt and Surrey the influence of Italian literature acted principally in two ways. First, it brought into their love-poems a tone of personal appeal, such as we find in Petrarch, but not in Petrarch's English contemporaries: a passion which begs, complains, reproaches, which is edged with doubt or saddened with disappointment. This is particularly noticeable in Wyatt, whose two lyrics here quoted are different in kind from any previous expression of English poetry: the feeling penetrates deeper, it touches the spring of tears, it beats with

an emotion that is stirred by tragic issues. And though Surrey is more superficial, yet he often tunes his lute for the same melody, pressing the notes with less insistence but tempering the strings to a minor key. Secondly, it enriched with new forms the accumulating resources of English versification. Wyatt wrote our first sonnet, Surrey our first example of blank verse: the one fashioned upon the classical scheme of Petrarch, the other a direct adaptation of the *versi sciolti* into which Ippolito dei Medici and his collaborators had translated the *Aeneid*. In these early examples it is natural that the rhythm should be somewhat stiff and uneasy: broken at the end of almost every line, beaten with difficulty from a metal not yet made malleable to the stroke. But though far inferior to the grace of their Italian models, they spoke from the outset with firmness and distinction: indeed, the following illustration from Wyatt is not unworthy of a place in the golden age of the Elizabethans. At any rate they rough-hewed the stones which, shaped by another century of skill and experience, were built into stately and imperishable fabrics by the hand of Milton.

SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503-1542), son of Sir Henry Wyatt, was born at Allingham Castle, Kent, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. About 1520 he became a gentleman of the king's bedchamber, and married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Brook of Cobham. In 1533 he was ewerer at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, in 1535 he was knighted, and shortly afterwards was sent as ambassador to Spain. In 1539 he was recalled at his own request: next year, on the fall of his friend Thomas Cromwell, he was arraigned as a traitor and committed to the Tower. After some months of imprisonment he was tried and acquitted. The king offered amends by giving him a grant of land at Lambeth, and in 1542 appointed him as envoy to escort from Falmouth the Spanish ambassador who had been sent over by Charles V to discuss an alliance against the French.

On the road Wyatt was taken with a fever and died at Sherborne. His works, most of which were written during the latter part of his life, include paraphrases of the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, three satires in *terza rima*, and a collection of songs and sonnets first published in Tottel's *Miscellany*, 1557.

AN EARNEST SUIT TO HIS UNKIND
MISTRESS NOT TO FORSAKE HIM

And wilt thou leave me thus ?
Say nay ! say nay ! for shame !
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame.
And wilt thou leave me thus ?
Say nay ! say nay !

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath loved thee so long,
In wealth and woe among ?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus ?
Say nay ! say nay !

10

And wilt thou leave me thus
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart,
Neither for pain nor smart ?
And wilt thou leave me thus ?
Say nay ! say nay !

And wilt thou leave me thus
And have no more pity
Of him that loveth thee ?
Alas, thy cruelty !
And wilt thou leave me thus ?
Say nay ! say nay !

20

FORGET NOT YET

FORGET not yet the tried intent
 Of such a troth as I have meant !
 My great travail, so gladly spent,
 Forget not yet.

Forget not yet when first began
 The weary life ye know ! since whan
 The suit, the service, none tell can !
 Forget not yet !

Forget not yet the great assays,
 The cruel wrong, the scornful ways, 10
 The painful patience in delays,
 Forget not yet !

Forget not—O forget not this !
 How long ago hath been, and is,
 The mind that never meant amiss—
 Forget not yet !

Forget not then thine own approved,
 The which so long hath thee so loved,
 Whose steadfast faith yet never moved :
 Forget not this ! 20

SONNET

My galley, charged with forgetfulness,
 Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass
 'Tween rock and rock ; and eke my foe, alas !
 That is my lord, steereth with cruelness ;
 And every oar, a thought in readiness ;
 As though that death were light in such a case,
 An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
 Of forced sighs, and trusty fearfulness.

A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance, 10
Wreathed with error, and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain ;
Drowned is Reason, that should with me consort,
And I remain, despairing of the port.

DEATH AND LOVE

THE en'my of life, decayer of all kind,
That with his cold withers away the green,
The other night me in my bed did find
And offered me to rid my fever clean :
And I did grant ; so did despair me blind,
He drew his bow with arrows sharp and keen
And strake the place where love had hit before
And drave the first dart deeper, more and more.

SURREY, HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF (1517 ?-1547), son of the Duke of Norfolk, was brought up at the court of Henry VIII, to whom in 1526 he became cupbearer. In 1535 he married Lady Frances Vere, daughter of John, Earl of Oxford ; in 1542 he was made a Knight of the Garter, and the same year was imprisoned in the Fleet for brawling. On his release he joined the expedition against Scotland, of which his father was in command, and took part in the battle of Solway Moss. In April, 1543, he was summoned before the Recorder of London for breaking the citizens' windows with a stone-bow, and once more committed to the Fleet. From 1543 to 1546 he was engaged in the French wars, and during the latter part of this time commanded the English army at Boulogne. Shortly after his recall he quarrelled with the Earl of Hertford (afterwards Lord Protector Somerset), who induced Henry VIII to send him to the Tower on the pretext that he had quartered the Royal Arms with his own. For this offence he was beheaded as a traitor on January 21, 1547. His works, none of which can be dated with any certainty, include metrical paraphrases of the first five chapters of *Ecclesiastes* and of the 8th, 55th, 73rd,

and 88th *Psalms*, a translation of Books ii and iv of the *Aeneid*, and a collection of songs, sonnets, &c., printed in Tottel's *Miscellany*, 1557. The sonnet-sequence which bears the name of *Geraldine* is said to have been addressed to Elizabeth, daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare. She was a child of seven at the date of Surrey's marriage, and was only nineteen when he was executed.

THE LADY GERALDINE

FROM Tuscan came my Lady's worthy race ;
 Fair Florence was sometime their ancient seat :
 The Western isle whose pleasant shore doth face
 Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat :
 Fostered she was with milk of Irish breast :
 Her sire an Earl, her dame of Princes' blood.
 From tender years in Britain she doth rest
 With king's child, where she tasteth costly food.
 Hunsden did first present her to mine eyen :
 Bright is her hue and Geraldine she hight : 10
 Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine,
 And Windsor, alas ! doth chase her from my sight.
 Her beauty of kind, her virtues from above :—
 Happy is he that can obtain her love.

MORNING

THE sun when he hath spread his rays,
 And showed his face ten thousand ways,
 Ten thousand things do then begin,
 To show the life that they are in.
 The heaven shows lively art and hue
 Of sundry shapes and colours new,
 And laughs upon the earth ; anon
 The earth, as cold as any stone,
 Wet in the tears of her own kind,
 'Gins then to take a joyful mind. 10

For well she feels that out and out
 The sun doth warm her round about,
 And dries her children tenderly,
 And shows them forth full orderly :—
 The mountains high, and how they stand,
 The valleys and the great main land,
 The trees, the herbs, the towers strong,
 The castles and the rivers long.

The hunter then sounds out his horn
 And rangeth straight through wood and corn ; 20
 On hills then show the ewe and lamb,
 And every young one with his dam.
 Then lovers walk and tell their tale,
 Both of their bliss and of their bale,
 And how they serve, and how they do,
 And how their lady loves them too.
 Then tune the birds their harmony ;
 Then flock the fowl in company ;
 Then everything doth pleasure find
 In that, that comforts all his kind. 30

THE HAPPY LIFE

(Imitated from Martial)

MARTIAL, the things that do attain
 The happy life be these, I find :—
 The riches left¹, not got with pain :
 The fruitful ground, the quiet mind :
 The equal friend ; no grudge, no strife ;
 No charge of rule, nor governance ;
 Without disease the healthful life ;
 The household of continuance ;

¹ 'Inherited' : 'res non parta labore sed relicta', in the original.

The mean¹ diet, no delicate fare ;
 True wisdom joined with simpleness ; 10
 The night discharged of all care,
 Where wine the wit may not oppress ;
 The faithful wife without debate ;
 Such sleeps as may beguile the night ;
 Contented with thine own estate,
 Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

FROM THE TRANSLATION OF THE AENEID

WHILE Laocoon, that chosen was by lot
 Neptunus' priest, did sacrifice a bull
 Before the holy altar ; suddenly
 From Tenedon, behold ! in circles great,
 By the calm seas came fleeting adders twain,
 Which plied towards the shore (I loathe to tell)
 With reared breast lift up above the seas :
 Whose bloody crests aloft the waves were seen ;
 The hinder part swam hidden in the flood.
 Their grisly backs were linked manifold. 10
 With sound of broken waves they gat the strand,
 With glowing eyen, tainted with blood and fire ;
 Whose waltring² tongues did lick their hissing mouths.
 We fled away : our face the blood forsook ;
 But they with gait direct to Locan ran.
 And first of all each serpent doth enwrap
 The bodies small of his two tender sons ;
 Whose wretched limbs they bit and fed thereon.
 Then raught they him who had his weapon caught
 To rescue them, twice winding him about, 20
 With folded knots and circled tails, his waist :
 Their scaled backs did compass twice his neck,
 With reared heads aloft and stretched throats.

¹ 'Moderate'.² 'Rolling' (cf. our word 'welter').

THOMAS SACKVILLE, 1st Earl of Dorset and Baron Buckhurst (1536-1608), son of Sir Richard Sackville, was born at Buckhurst in Sussex and educated at the neighbouring school of Sullington. It is possible, though not certain, that he studied at both Universities. About 1557, the year in which he entered Parliament, he projected a poem on the plan of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, but after writing the Prologue or *Induction* gave up the work, probably under stress of public duties, and handed it over to his friends Richard Baldwin and George Ferrers, who completed it under the title of *A Mirrour for Magistrates* (first part 1559, second part 1563). In 1560 he collaborated with Thomas Norton over the tragedy of *Gorboduc*, of which he wrote the last two acts. In 1566 he succeeded his father, next year he was raised to the Peerage, and from thenceforward his career was almost entirely diplomatic and political. He was ambassador to France (1568 and 1571), and to the Low Countries (1587); in 1591 he was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford; in 1598 he succeeded Burghley as Lord Treasurer; he was appointed Lord High Steward in 1601, and Commissioner for the Peace with Spain in 1604. He died suddenly at the Council table, April 19, 1608. The interest of his career is enhanced by his relation to the works of two among the most famous of his contemporaries. Ascham's *Scholemaster* was written in response to an inquiry about his education, and to him is dedicated one of the sonnets which Spenser prefixed to the first book of the *Faery Queene*.

INDUCTION TO THE 'MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES'

THE wrathful Winter, 'proaching on apace,
With blustering blasts had all ybar'd¹ the treen,
And old Saturnus, with his frosty face,
With chilling cold had pierc'd the tender green;
The mantles rent, wherein enwrapped been
The gladsome groves that now lay overthrown,
The tapets² torn, and every bloom down blown.

¹ 'Bared'.

² Lit. 'hangings'.

The soil, that erst so seemly was to seen,
 Was all despoiled of her beauty's hue ;
 And soot fresh flowers, wherewith the summer's queen 10
 Had clad the earth, now Boreas' blasts down blew ;
 And small fowls flocking, in their song did rue
 The winter's wrath, wherewith each thing defac'd
 In woeful wise bewail'd the summer past.

Hawthorn had lost his motley livery,
 The naked twigs were shivering all for cold,
 And dropping down the tears abundantly ;
 Each thing, methought, with weeping eye me told
 The cruel season, bidding me withhold
 Myself within ; for I was gotten out 20
 Into the fields, whereas I walk'd about.

When lo, the night with misty mantles spread,
 'Gan dark the day, and dim the azure skies ;
 And Venus in her message Hermes sped
 To bloody Mars, to will him not to rise,
 While she herself approach'd in speedy wise ;
 And Virgo hiding her disdainful breast,
 With Thetis now had laid her down to rest.

That musing on this worldly wealth in thought,
 Which comes, and goes, more faster than we see 30
 The flickering flame that with the fire is wrought,
 My busy mind presented unto me
 Such fall of peers as in this realm had be ;
 That oft I wish'd some would their woes describe,
 To warn the rest whom fortune left alive.

And straight forth stalking with redoubled pace,
 For that I saw the night drew on so fast,
 In black all clad, there fell before my face

A piteous wight, whom woe had all forwast¹ ;
 Forth from her eyen the crystal tears out brast ; 40
 And sighing sore, her hands she wrung and fold,
 Tare all her hair, that ruth was to behold.
 Her body small, forwither'd, and forspent,
 As is the stalk that summer's drought oppress'd ;
 Her welkèd² face with woeful tears besprent ;
 Her colour pale ; and, as it seem'd her best,
 In woe and plaint reposed was her rest ;
 And, as the stone that drops of water wears,
 So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.
 Her eyes swoll'n with flowing streams afloat, 50
 Wherewith, her looks thrown up full piteously,
 Her forceless hands together oft she smote,
 With doleful shrieks, that echoed in the sky ;
 Whose plaint such sighs did straight accompany,
 That, in my doom, was never man did see
 A wight but half so woebegone as she.
 I stood aghast, beholding all her plight,
 'Tween dread and dolour so distraïn'd in heart
 That, while my hairs upstartèd with the sight,
 The tears outstream'd for sorrow of her smart : 60
 But when I saw no end that could apart
 The deadly dewle³ which she so sore did make,
 With doleful voice then thus to her I spake :
 'Unwrap thy woes, whatever wight thou be,
 And stint⁴, in time, to spill⁵ thyself with plaint :
 Tell what thou art, and whence, for well I see
 Thou canst not dure⁶, with sorrow thus attain't :'
 And, with that word of Sorrow, all forfaint
 She looked up, and, prostrate as she lay,
 With piteous sound, lo, thus she gan to say : 70

¹ 'Wasted away'.² 'Withered'.³ 'Mourning'.⁴ 'Cease'.⁵ 'Destroy'.⁶ 'Endure'.

'Alas, I wretch, whom thus thou seest distraïn'd
With wasting woes that never shall aslake,
Sorrow I am ; in endless torments pain'd
Among the Furies in the infernal lake,
Where Pluto, god of hell, so grisly black,
Doth hold his throne, and Lethe's deadly taste
Doth reave remembrance of each thing forepast :

'Whence come I am, the dreary destiny
And luckless lot for to bemoan of those
Whom Fortune, in this maze of misery, 80
Of wretched chance, most woeful Mirrors chose ;
That, when thou seest how lightly they did lose
Their pomp, their power, and that they thought most sure,
Thou may'st soon deem no earthly joy may dure.'

Whose rueful voice no sooner had out-bray'd
Those woeful words wherewith she sorrow'd so,
But out, alas, she shrigh^t¹, and never stay'd,
Fell down, and all to-dash'd herself for woe :
The cold pale dread my limbs gan overgo,
And I so sorrow'd at her sorrows eft², 90
That, what with grief and fear, my wits were reft.

I stretch'd myself, and straight my heart revives,
That dread and dolour erst did so appale ;
Like him that with the fervent fever strives,
When sickness seeks his castle health to scale ;
With gather'd spirits so forc'd I fear t' avale³ :
And, rearing her, with anguish all fordone,
My spirits return'd, and then I thus begun :

'O Sorrow, alas ! sith Sorrow is thy name,
And that to thee this drear doth well pertain, 100
In vain it were to seek to cease the same :

¹ 'Shrieked'. ² 'I so sorrowed again at her sorrows'. ³ 'Abate'.

But, as a man himself with sorrow slain,
 So I, alas! do comfort thee in pain,
 That here in sorrow art forsunk so deep,
 That at thy sight I can but sigh and weep.¹

I had no sooner spoken of a stike¹,
 But that the storm so rumbled in her breast
 As Aeölus could never roar the like;
 And showers down rained from her eyen so fast,
 That all bedrent the place, till at the last, 110
 Well eased they the dolour of her mind,
 As rage of rain doth swage the stormy wind:

For forth she paced in her fearful tale:
 'Come, come,' quoth she, 'and see what I shall show;
 Come, hear the plaining and the bitter bale
 Of worthy men by Fortune overthrow:
 Come thou, and see them rueing all in row,
 They were but shades that erst in mind thou roll'd:
 Come, come with me, thine eyes shall them behold.'

Flat down I fell, and with all reverence 120
 Adored her, perceiving now that she,
 A goddess, sent by godly Providence,
 In earthly shape thus show'd herself to me,
 To wail and rue this world's uncertainty:
 And while I honour'd thus her godhead's might,
 With plaining voice these words to me she shrigh't.

'I shall thee guide first to the grisly lake,
 And thence unto the blissful place of rest,
 Where thou shalt see, and hear, the plaint they make
 That whilom here bare swing² among the best: 130
 This shalt thou see: but great is the unrest
 That thou must bide, before thou canst attain
 Unto the dreadful place where these remain.'

¹ 'Sigh'.² 'Sway'.

And, with these words, as I upraised stood,
And gan to follow her that straight forth pac'd
Ere I was ware, into a desert wood
We now were come, where, hand in hand embrac'd,
She led the way, and through the thick so trac'd,
As, but I had been guided by her might,
It was no way for any mortal wight.

140

But lo, while thus amid the desert dark
We passed on with steps and pace unmeet,
A rumbling roar, confus'd with howl and bark
Of dogs, shook all the ground under our feet,
And struck the din within our ears so deep,
As, half distraught, unto the ground I fell,
Besought return, and not to visit hell.

But she, forthwith, uplifting me apace,
Remov'd my dread, and with a steadfast mind
Bade me come on ; for here was now the place,
The place where we our travail end should find :
Wherewith I rose, and to the place assign'd
Astoin'd I stalk, when straight we approached near
The dreadful place, that you will dread to hear.

150

An hideous hole all vast, withouten shape,
Of endless depth, o'erwhelmed with ragged stone,
With ugly mouth and grisly jaws doth gape,
And to our sight confounds itself in one :
Here enter'd we, and yeding¹ forth, anon
An horrible loathly lake we might discern,
As black as pitch, that clepèd is Avern.

160

A deadly gulf : where nought but rubbish grows,
With foul black swelth in thicken'd lumps that lies,
Which up in th' air such stinking vapours throws,

¹ ' Going '.

That over there may fly no fowl but dies
Chok'd with the pestilent savours that arise :

Hither we come ; whence forth we still did pace,
In dreadful fear amid the dreadful place :

And, first, within the porch and jaws of hell,
Sat deep Remorse of Conscience, all besprent 170
With tears ; and to herself oft would she tell
Her wretchedness, and cursing never stent
To sob and sigh ; but ever thus lament,
With thoughtful care, as she that, all in vain,
Would wear and waste continually in pain.

Her eyes unsteadfast, rolling here and there,
Whirl'd on each place, as place that vengeance brought,
So was her mind continually in fear,
Toss'd and tormented with the tedious thought 180
Of those detested crimes which she had wrought ;
With dreadful cheer¹, and looks thrown to the sky,
Wishing for death, and yet she could not die.

Next saw we Dread, all trembling how he shook,
With foot uncertain, proffer'd here and there :
Benumb'd of speech, and with a ghastly look
Search'd every place, all pale and dead for fear,
His cap borne up with staring² of his hair,
'Stoin'd and amaz'd at his own shade for dread,
And fearing greater dangers than was need.

And next, within the entry of this lake, 190
Sat fell Revenge, gnashing her teeth for ire,
Devising means how she may vengeance take,
Never in rest till she have her desire :
But frets within so far forth with the fire
Of wreaking flames, that now determines she
To die by death, or veng'd by death to be.

¹ 'Countenance'.

² i.e. stiffening.

When fell Revenge, with bloody foul pretence
Had show'd herself, as next in order set,
With trembling limbs we softly parted thence,
Till in our eyes another sight we met: 200
When from my heart a sigh forthwith I fet,
Rueing, alas! upon the woeful plight
Of Misery, that next appear'd in sight.

His face was lean, and somedeal pin'd away,
And eke his hands consumed to the bone;
But what his body was I cannot say,
For on his carcass raiment had he none
Save clouts and patches, pieced one by one;
With staff in hand, and scrip on shoulders cast,
His chief defence against the winter's blast. 210

His food, for most, was wild fruits of the tree,
Unless sometimes some crumbs fell to his share,
Which in his wallet long, God wot, kept he,
As on the which full daint'ly would he fare:
His drink, the running stream; his cup, the bare
Of his palm clos'd; his bed, the hard cold ground:
To this poor life was Misery ybound.

Whose wretched state when we had well beheld,
With tender ruth on him, and on his feres¹,
In thoughtful cares forth then our pace we held; 220
And, by and by, another shape appears,
Of greedy Care, still brushing up the breres²,
His knuckles knobb'd, his flesh deep dented in,
With tawed³ hands, and hard ytannèd skin.

The morrow gray no sooner hath begun
To spread his light, even peeping in our eyes,
When he is up, and to his work yrun:

¹ 'Companions'.

² 'Briers'.

³ 'Hardened'.

But let the night's black misty mantles rise,
And with foul dark never so much disguise
The fair bright day, yet ceaseth he no while, 230
But hath his candles to prolong his toil.

By him lay heavy Sleep, the cousin of Death,
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,
A very corpse, save yielding forth a breath :
Small keep took he, whom Fortune frowned on,
Or whom she lifted up into the throne
Of high renown ; but, as a living death,
So, dead alive, of life he drew the breath.

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travail's ease, the still night's fere was he, 240
And of our life in earth the better part ;
Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that never be ;
Without respect, esteeming equally
King Croesus' pomp and Irus'¹ poverty.

And next in order sad Old Age we found :
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
As on the place where Nature him assign'd
To rest, when that the sisters had untwin'd 250
His vital thread, and ended with their knife
The fleeting course of fast declining life.

There heard we him with broke and hollow plaint
Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
And all for nought his wretched mind torment
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
And fresh delights of lusty youth forwaste ;
Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek,
And to be young again of Jove beseek.

¹ Name of a beggar in the *Odyssey*. See *Od.* xviii. 1.

But, and the cruel fates so fixèd be 260
That time forpast cannot return again,
This one request of Jove yet prayèd he:
That, in such wither'd plight and wretched pain
As eld, accompanied with his loathsome train,
Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might a while yet linger forth his life,

And not so soon descend into the pit,
Where Death, when he the mortal corpse hath slain,
With reckless hand in grave doth cover it;
Thereafter never to enjoy again 270
The gladsome light, but, in the ground ylain,
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had ne'er into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing, how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forpast, as though it wrought him good
To talk of youth all¹ were his youth forgone,
He would have mus'd and marvell'd much whereon
This wretched Age should life desire so fain,
And knows full well life doth but length his pain. 280

Crookback'd he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed,
Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four,
With old lame bones that rattled by his side,
His scalp all pill'd², and he with eld forlore;
His wither'd fist still knocking at Death's door,
Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath;
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

And fast by him pale Malady was plac'd,
Sore sick in bed, her colour all forgone,
Bereft of stomach³, savour, and of taste, 290

¹ 'Although'.² 'Bald'.³ 'Appetite'.

Ne could she brook no meat, but broths alone :
 Her breath corrupt, her keepers every one
 Abhorring her, her sickness past recure,
 Detesting physic and all physic's cure.

But, oh, the doleful sight that then we see !
 We turn'd our look, and, on the other side,
 A grisly shape of Famine might we see,
 With greedy looks, and gaping mouth, that cried
 And roar'd for meat, as she should there have died ;

 Her body thin, and bare as any bone, 300
 Whereto was left nought but the case alone.

And that, alas ! was gnawn on everywhere,
 All full of holes, that I ne might refrain
 From tears, to see how she her arms could tear,
 And with her teeth gnash on the bones in vain,
 When, all for nought, she fain would so sustain
 Her starven corpse, that rather seem'd a shade
 Than any substance of a creature made.

Great was her force, whom stone wall could not stay,
 Her tearing nails snatching at all she saw ; 310
 With gaping jaws, that by no means ymay¹
 Be satisfied from hunger of her maw,
 But eats herself, as she that hath no law :
 Gnawing, alas ! her carcass all in vain,
 Where you may count each sinew, bone, and vein.

On her while we thus firmly fix'd our eyes,
 That bled for ruth of such a dreary sight,
 Lo, suddenly she shright in so huge wise,
 As made hell-gates to shiver with the might :
 Wherewith, a dart we saw, how it did light 320
 Right on her breast, and, therewithal, pale Death
 Enthrilling it², to reave her of her breath.

¹ ' May ' (the first syllable added by false analogy). ² i. e. driving it in.

And, by and by, a dumb dead corpse we saw,
Heavy, and cold, the shape of Death aright,
That daunts all earthly creatures to his law :
Against whose force in vain it is to fight :
Ne peers, ne princes, nor no mortal wight,
No towns, ne realms, cities, ne strongest tower,
But all, perforce, must yield unto his power.

His dart anon out of the corpse he took, 330
And in his hand (a dreadful sight to see)
With great triumph eftsoons the same he shook,
That most of all my fears affrayed me :
His body dight with nought but bones, parde,
The naked shape of man there saw I plain,
All save the flesh, the sinew, and the vein.

Lastly, stood War, in glittering arms yelad,
With visage grim, stern looks, and blackly hued ;
In his right hand a naked sword he had,
That to the hilts was all with blood imbrued ; 340
And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued)
Famine and fire he held, and therewithal
He razed towns, and threw down towers and all.

Cities he sack'd, and realms (that whilom flower'd
In honour, glory, and rule, above the best)
He overwhelm'd, and all their fame devour'd,
Consum'd, destroy'd, wasted and never ceas'd,
Till he their wealth, their name, and all oppress'd :
His face forhew'd with wounds, and by his side
There hung his targe¹, with gashes deep and wide. 350

¹ 'Shield'.

CHAPTER X

SPENSER

SPENSER has been called the poets' poet, and with good reason. He is at once the great seer to whose vision the whole realm of fantasy lies open, and the great virtuoso whose mastery over his instrument is a lesson to all that follow the craft. No man before Keats was animated by so passionate a sense of beauty: a beauty of face and form, of line and colour, of living clustering rhythm, and of imagery that glows amid the verse like a flower amid tendrils. Chaucer's Cressida is pale beside the Lady Belphoebe and the Lady Pride: Surrey's Geraldine is dim beside the heroine of the *Amoretti*: and though English poetry had put forth many blossoms of melodious line and haunting cadence, it had never matched the splendour and triumph of the stanza which begins:

Open the Temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in.

Such verse as this is for pure delight: it sounds in the ear like music, it quickens us to a sense of personal love and adoration. Even the melodies of Marlowe and Shakespeare are not more rich, more varied, or more stately.

It was his good fortune to stand at the meeting-point of two convergent streams. On the one hand, mediaeval asceticism which bade beauty be the handmaid of morality and religion, which set her to adorn churches and illuminate missals, which in poetry, in painting, and in music held her strictly to the work of edification. On the other hand, the

frank sensuous paganism of the renaissance, wholly preoccupied with human interests and 'the warm kind earth': following loveliness wherever it led, without thought of law or prophets, of direction or consequence. In the generation before him they were drawing closer together: the one laying aside its fears, the other moderating its tone of challenge and revolt: by his time they had come so near that he could derive his inspiration from both. The *Faery Queene* is as pure as the Lives of the Saints, and as sensuous as Tasso's Armida: it builds a cathedral and decorates it with the mosaics of Titian; it abates no jot of its artistic purpose, yet it uses all for the service of the sanctuary. Over arch and doorway the colours lie thick upon their golden background, and we enter with bared head and with mind attuned to worship.

He makes abundant use of the accepted conventions: the conventional forest, the conventional tourney, the current methods of allegory and personification: but he touches them all with a magic that gives them new meaning and new vitality. So it is with his treatment of the customary forms: the sonnet, the classical eclogue, the classical elegy become as much his own as the Spenserian stanza: they are taken by right of conquest and governed with a munificence that can amply reward. No genius was ever more indebted or repaid the debt with a more lavish interest.

It would be idle to say that he is faultless. The plan of the *Faery Queene* is perhaps too large, it is certainly too much determined by a formal symmetry. Hence to fill its measures there are sometimes otiose digressions and episodes: passages that have no outlet, but force the reader to retrace his steps. Yet the passages are hung with tapestries and banners, the windows are brave with scutcheons, and it is a very impatient critic who complains that they

have misdirected the way. Every gift of mediaeval poetry is here: chivalry and learning, pageant and adventure, legends of fairyland and romance: all bathed and irradiated with a light that shines from the very source of love through the glowing casements of imagination. In his hands nothing is trivial or prosaic: the canto of months is like a masque, the canto of rivers is like a picture-gallery, even the genealogy of British kings is a procession of sonorous names and vivid descriptions. Through all these, with many a wind and turn, the story slowly unfolds itself: half allegory and half romance, the spirit of the renaissance without its coarseness, the spirit of mediaeval religion without its reserve.

Spenser is so essentially the author of the *Faery Queene* that we are in some danger of forgetting his shorter poems. Of these the sonnets need not here be considered: they will find place in the next chapter. The *Shepherd's Calendar* consists of a set of eclogues, modelled more or less on the *Bucolics* of Virgil: a young man's work, sometimes a little crude and artificial, but containing some genuine observation of nature and a remarkable ingenuity of metrical experiment. No doubt it is largely to these that we owe the flexibility and sweetness which characterized Spenser's rhythm in later days. The volume called *Complaints* is mainly noticeable for the elegies on Sir Philip Sidney, the finest English elegiac poems before *Lycidas*: the other numbers are weaker and of less account. *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, a satire written after the manner of Chaucer, has many incisive passages, but, like the *Tears of the Muses*, is now and then querulous in speech. Spenser was not masculine enough for satire, and in this respect alone his hand may be said to fail. But among all the shorter poems one stands pre-eminent. The *Epithalamion*

is the noblest marriage-hymn in our language, and one of the noblest in the world. Its magnificent verse burns with a white-heat of rapture which never cools or fades: it celebrates the victory and reward of love in strains that have caught echoes from the celestial city. In the volume of its choiring voices we can most truly hear the poet to whom all love and beauty were divine: who could see in the passion of man a stairway to the gates of heaven.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552 ?-1599) was born in London. His father was a native of Lancashire, and Dr. Grosart (i. 408-21) finds traces of the Lancashire dialect in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. He entered Merchant Taylors' School, probably in 1561, the year of its foundation, and remained there until 1569, when he went up to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. While still at school he contributed versions of Petrarch and Du Bellay to the English translation of Van der Noodt's *Theatre for Worldlings*. At Cambridge he read widely in the Latin and Greek classics, as well as in the works of Petrarch, Du Bellay, Marot, and Chaucer, and formed an intimate friendship with the eccentric scholar Gabriel Harvey, who became Fellow of Pembroke in 1570. He left the University in 1576, and, after residing for a short time with his kinsfolk at Hurstwood, went up to London and became a member of the Earl of Leicester's household. For about three years he acted as dispatch-bearer, and in that capacity visited Ireland, Italy, and Spain. In 1579, during the intervals of travel, he completed the *Shepherd's Calendar*, which was published on Dec. 5. By April, 1580, he was back at Leicester House, where he made acquaintance with Philip Sidney (Leicester's nephew), and where he founded a literary club called the Areopagus, with Sidney, Drant, Sir Edward Dyer, and others. His letters of the time mention several works which are now lost, including nine comedies, a tract called 'The English Poet' (probably known to Sidney), and several metrical romances. During this spring he wrote, at Leicester House, the first book of the *Faery Queene* and part of the second. In July, 1580, he went to Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, the Lord Deputy, and thenceforward made his home in that country: first in Wexford, then at New Abbey

in Kildare, then, on his appointment as Clerk of the Munster Council (1588), at Kilcolman Castle, near Doneraile. He had little understanding of the Irish character, and shared in full measure the unpopularity which has often been the lot of English officials. In 1589-90 he paid a visit to England, published the first three books of the *Faery Queene*, and was granted a pension of £50 by Elizabeth, whence he has sometimes been erroneously styled Poet Laureate. In 1591 he published, from Ireland, a collection of nine poems with the characteristic title of *Complaints*, including the *Ruines of Time*, the *Teares of the Muses*, *Virgil's Gnat* (an adaptation of the pseudo-Virgilian *Culex*), and his boyish versions of Petrarch and Du Bellay. In the same year he wrote *Colin Clout*, an eclogue in which he alludes to Shakespeare under the name of Aetion. In 1594 he married, after two years' courtship, Elizabeth Boyle, a kinswoman of the Earl of Cork. The collection of sonnets called *Amoretti* was written to commemorate his wooing, the *Epithalamion* to celebrate his marriage. They were all published in 1595 together with *Colin Clout* and the elegies, one of which (*To Astrophel*, 1586) had been composed on the death of Sir Philip Sidney. At the end of 1595 he again visited England, bringing with him Books iv-vi of the *Faery Queene*. During his stay in London he resided at Essex House, where he wrote the *Prothalamion*, for the marriage of two daughters of the Earl of Worcester, and a prose dialogue *On the Present State of Ireland*, which, though somewhat harsh and unsympathetic in tone, draws attention to some defects in the English administration, and especially to the ignorance and degradation of the Protestant clergy. He returned to Ireland in 1597, and next year was made High Sheriff of Cork. In the autumn of 1598 came the rebellion of Hugh O'Neill; the English were defeated at the battle of the Yellow Ford; and in October, Kilcolman Castle was burned and Spenser, with his family, fled to Cork, where he wrote a 'briefe note' to Elizabeth demanding redress. At the instance of Sir Thomas Norris he was summoned to England, and, though broken in health, set out on his journey forthwith. He arrived in London at the end of 1598, and died there Jan. 16, 1599. The story that he died of want is supported by no sound evidence, and is intrinsically improbable.

The *Faery Queene* was planned in twelve books, of which only six were completed. Of the remaining six one fragment, consisting of a couple of Cantos on the Knight of Constancie, was discovered after Spenser's death and published, with the reprint of Books i-vi, in 1611. It is possible that other fragments perished in the destruction of Kilcolman Castle, but it is unlikely that any considerable portion of the last half was ever written.

THE SHEPHEARD'S CALENDAR: APRIL

THENOT. HOBBINOLL

The. TELL me, good Hobbinoll, what garres thee gree¹?

What? hath some Wolfe thy tender Lambes ytorne?

Or is thy Bagpype broke, that soundes so sweete?

Or art thou of thy loved lasse forlorne?

Or bene thine eyes attempted to the yeare,

Quenching the gasping furrowes thirst with rayne?

Like April shoure so stremes the trickling teares

Adowne thy cheeke, to quenche thy thristye payne.

Hob. Northys, nor that, so muche doeth make me mourne,

But for the ladde, whome long I lov'd so deare, 10

Nowe loves a lasse that all his love doth scorne:

He, plongd in payne, his tressed locks dooth teare.

Shepheards delights he dooth them all forswear;

Hys pleasaunt Pipe, whych made us meriment,

He wyfully hath broke, and doth forbear

His wonted songs, wherein he all outwent.

The. What is he for a Ladde you so lament?

Ys love such pinching payne to them that prove?

And hath he skill to make so excellent,

Yet hath so little skill to brydle love? 20

¹ 'Makes thee weep'. See Spenser's 'Glosse' to this Eclogue, which should be carefully studied with the text.

Hob. Colin thou kenst, the Southerne shepheardes boye;
 Him Love hath wounded with a deadly darte:
 Whilome on him was all my care and joye,
 Forcing with gyfts to winne his wanton heart.

But now from me hys madding mynd is starte,
 And woes the Widdowes daughter of the glenne;
 So nowe fayre Rosalind hath bredde hys smart,
 So now his frend is chaunged for a frenne¹.

The. But if hys ditties bene so trimly dight,
 I pray thee, Hobbinoll, recorde some one, 30
 The whiles our flockes do graze about in sight,
 And we close shrowded in thys shade alone.

Hob. Contented I: then, will I singe his laye
 Of fayre Elisa², Queene of shepheardes all,
 Which once he made as by a spring he laye,
 And tuned it unto the Waters fall.

‘Ye daynty Nymphs, that in this blessed brooke
 Doe bathe your brest,
 Forsake your watry bowres, and hether looke,
 At my request: 40
 And eke you Virgins, that on Parnasse dwell,
 Whence floweth Helicon, the learned well,
 Helpe me to blaze
 Her worthy praise,
 Which in her sexe doth all excell.

‘Of fayre Elisa be your silver song,
 That blessed wight,
 The flowre of Virgins: may shee flourish long
 In princely plight!
 For shee is Syrinx daughter without spotte, 50
 Which Pan, the shepheards God, of her begot:

¹ ‘Stranger’.

² i. e. Queen Elizabeth.

So sprong her grace
Of heavenly race,
No mortall blemishe may her blotte.
'See, where she sits upon the grassie greene,
(O seemely sight!)
Yclad in Scarlot, like a mayden Queene,
And ermines white:
Upon her head a Cremosin¹ coronet,
With Damaske roses and Daffadillies set: 60
Bay leaves betweene,
And primroses greene,
Embellish the sweete Violet.
'Tell me, have ye seene her angelick face,
Like Phoebe fayre?
Her heavenly haveour, her princely grace,
Can you well compare?
The Redde rose medled² with the White yfere³,
In either cheeke depeincten lively chere:
Her modest eye, 70
Her Majestie,
Where have you seene the like but there?
'I sawe Phoebus thrust out his golden hedde,
Upon her to gaze:
But, when he sawe how broade her beames did spredde,
It did him amaze.
He blusht to see another Sunne belowe,
Ne durst againe his fyrye face out showe:
Let him, if he dare,
His brightnesse compare 80
With hers, to have the overthrowe.
'Shewe thyselfe, Cynthia, with thy silver rayes,
And be not abasht:

¹ 'Crimson'.² 'Mingled'.³ 'Together'.

When shee the beames of her beauty displayes,

O, how art thou dasht!

But I will not match her with Latonaes seede,
Such follie great sorow to Niobe did breede:

Now she is a stone,

And makes dayly mone,

Warning all other to take heede.

90

'Pan may be proud that ever he begot

Such a Bellibone¹;

And Syrinx rejoyse that ever was her lot

To beare such an one.

Soone as my younglings cryen for the dam

To her will I offer a milkwwhite Lamb:

Shee is my goddesse plaine,

And I her shepherd swayne,

Albee forswonck and forswatt² I am.

'I see Calliope speede her to the place,

100

Where my Goddesse shines;

And after her the other Muses trace,

With their Violines.

Bene they not Bay braunches which they do beare,

All for Elisa in her hand to weare?

So sweetely they play,

And sing all the way,

That it a heaven is to heare.

'Lo! how finely the Graces can it foote

To the Instrument:

110

They dauncen deffly³, and singen soote⁴,

In their meriment.

Wants not a fourth Grace, to make the daunce even?

Let that rowme⁵ to my Lady be yeven:

¹ 'Or a bonibell, homely spoken for a fayre mayde' (Spenser).

² 'Overlaboured and sunneburnt' (Spenser).

³ 'Deftly'.

⁴ 'Sweetly'.

⁵ 'Place'.

She shal be a Grace,
 To fyll the fourth place,
 And reigne with the rest in heaven.

' And whither rennes this bevie of Ladies bright,
 Raunged in a rowe?

They bene all Ladyes of the lake behight, 120
 That unto her goe.

Chloris, that is the chiefest Nymph of all,
 Of Olive braunches beares a Coronall:

Olives bene for peace,
 When wars doe surcease:
 Such for a Princesse bene principall¹.

' Ye shepheards daughters, that dwell on the greene,

Hye you there apace:
 Let none come there but that Virgins bene,
 To adorne her grace: 130

And, when you come whereas shee is in place,
 See that your rudenesse doe not you disgrace:

Binde your fillets faste,
 And gird in your waste,
 For more finenesse, with a tawdrie² lace.

' Bring hether the Pincke and purple Cullambine,
 With Gelliflowres;

Bring Coronations³, and Sops in wine⁴,

Worne of Paramoures: 140
 Strowe me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
 And Cowslips, and Kingeups, and loved Lillies:

The pretie Pawnce⁵,
 And the Chevisaunce⁶,
 Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice⁷.

¹ 'Proper'. ² Lit. 'from St. Audrey's fair', at which a showy kind of cheap lace was sold. ³ 'Carnations'. ⁴ 'A flowre much like to a Coronation' (Spenser). ⁵ 'Pansy'. ⁶ Not to be identified. 'Wall-flower' has been suggested. ⁷ 'Fleur de lys.'

'Now ryse up, Elisa, decked as thou art
 In royall aray ;
 And now ye daintie Damsells may depart
 Eche one her way.
 I feare I have troubled your troupes to longe :
 Let dame Elisa thanke you for her song : 150
 And if you come hether
 When Damsines I gether,
 I will part them all you among.'

The. And was thilk same song of Colins owne making ?
 Ah, foolish Boy ! that is with love yblent :
 Great pittie is, he be in such taking,
 For naught caren that bene so lewdly bent.

Hob. Sicker I hold him for a greater fon¹,
 That loves the thing he cannot purchase.
 But let us homeward, for night draweth on, 160
 And twincling starres the daylight hence chase.

THE FAERY QUEENE

Book I

UNA AND THE RED CROSS KNIGHT

A GENTLE Knight was pricking on the plaine,
 Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
 Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
 The cruel markes of many a bloudy felde ;
 Yet armes till that time did he never wield :
 His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
 As much disdayning to the curbe to yield :
 Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
 As one for knightly giusts² and fierce encounters fitt.

¹ 'Fool'.

² 'Tournaments'.

And on his brest a bloudie crosse he bore, 10
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead as living ever him ador'd :
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had :
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad ;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave, 20
That greatest glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
To winne him worship, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly things he most did crave ;
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne¹
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne ;
Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne.

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide 30
Under a vele, that wimpled² was full low,
And over all a blacke stole she did throw,
As one that inly mournd : so was she sad,
And heavie sat upon her palfrey slow :
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad.

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore,
And by descent from royall lynage came
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore 40
Their scepters stretcht from east to westerne shore

¹ 'Yeare'.

² 'Folded' : see n. 1, p. 95.

And all the world in their subjection held ;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld ;
Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compeld.

Behind her farre away a dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast, 50
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain,
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand :
Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starre : 60
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farre :
Faire harbour that them seems ; so in they entred arre.

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop elme, the poplar never dry, 70
The builder oake, sole king of forrests all,
The aspine good for staves, the cypresse funerall,

The laurell, meed of mightie conquerours
 And poets sage, the firre that weepeth still,
 The willow worne of forlorne paramours,
 The eugh obedient to the benders will,
 The birch for shaftes, the sallow¹ for the mill,
 The mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,
 The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
 The fruitful olive, and the platane² round, 80
 The carver holme³, the maple seeldom inward sound.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
 Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
 When, weening to returne whence they did stray,
 They cannot find that path, which first was showne,
 But wander too and fro in wayes unknowne,
 Furthest from end then, when they nearest weene,
 That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne:
 So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
 That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been. 90

At last resolving forward still to fare,
 Till that some end they finde or in or out,
 That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,
 And like to lead the labyrinth about;
 Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
 At length it brought them to a hollow cave
 Amid the thickest woods. The champion stout
 Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
 And to the dwarfe awhile his needlesse spere he gave.

'Be well aware,' quoth then that ladie milde, 100
 'Least suddaine mischiefes ye too rash provoke:
 The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
 Breedeth dreadfull doubts: oft fire is without smoke,
 And perill without show: therefore your stroke,

¹ 'Willow' (Fr. *saule*). ² 'Plane tree'. ³ 'Evergreen-oak'.

Sir knight, with-hold, till further triall made.
 'Ah ladie' (said he) 'shame were to revoke
 The forward footing for an hidden shade:
 * Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.'

'Yea but' (quoth she) 'the perill of this place
 I better wot then you; though now too late 110
 To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
 Yet wisdomes warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,
 To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
 This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
 A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
 Therefore I read beware.' 'Fly fly' (quoth then
 The fearefull dwarfe), 'this is no place for living men.'

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,
 The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
 But forth unto the darksome hole he went, 120
 And looked in: his glistring armor made
 A litle glooming light, much like a shade,
 By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
 Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
 But th' other halfe did womans shape retaine,
 Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

.
 Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd, he leapt
 As lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
 And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
 From turning backe, and forced her to stay: 130
 Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
 And turning fierce, her speckled taile advaunst,
 Threatning her angry sting, him to dismay:
 Who nought aghast his mightie hand enhaunst:
 The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

Much daunted with that dint her sence was dazd ;
Yet kindling rage, her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly body raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground :
Tho wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd, 140
Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirre he strove in vaine :
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine.

At this, the lady cries out in terror, bidding him 'Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee.' With a mighty effort he frees himself.

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin ;
And stroke at her with more then manly force, 150
That from her body full of filthie sin
He raft her hatefull head without remorse :
A streame of cole black bloud forth gushed from her corse.

.
His lady seeing all that chaunst from farre
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
And saide, ' Faire knight, borne under happy starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye :
Well worthie be you of that armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie, 160
Your first adventure : many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may.'

Then mounted he upon his steede againe,
 And with the lady backward sought to wend ;
 That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,
 Ne ever would to any by-way bend,
 But still did follow one unto the end,
 The which at last out of the wood them brought.
 So forward on his way (with God to frend)
 He passed forth, and new adventure sought ; 170
 Long way he traueiled, before he heard of ought.

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
 An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
 His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
 And by his belt his booke he hanging had ;
 Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
 And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
 Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad,
 And all the way he prayed, as he went,
 And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent. 180

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
 Who faire him quited¹, as that courteous was :
 And after asked him, if he did know
 Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
 'Ah my dear sonne' (quoth he) 'how should, alas,
 Silly² old man, that lives in hidden cell,
 Bidding³ his beades all day for his trespas,
 Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell ?
 With holy father sits not with such things to mell.

'But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell, 190
 And homebred evil ye desire to heare,
 Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
 That wasteth all this countrey farre and neare.'

¹ 'Answered' (cf. 'requite'). ² 'Feeble' (see l. 322). ³ 'Praying'.

'Of such' (said he) 'I chiefly do inquire;
And shall you well reward to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a space.'

'Far hence' (quoth he) 'in wastfull wilderness
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse.'
'Now' (sayd the lady) 'draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forweariad be: for what so strong,
But wanting rest will also want of might?
The sunne that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the ocean waves among.

'Then with the sunne take, Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin :
Untroubled night they say gives counsell best.' 210
'Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised bin,'
(Quoth then that aged man) 'the way to win
Is wisely to advise : now day is spent ;
Therefore with me ye may take up your In
For this same night.' The knight was well content ;
So with that godly father to his home they went.

A little lowly hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In travell to and froe: a little wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the hermite dewly went to say
His holy things each morne and eventyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

Arrived there, the little house they fill,
 Ne looke for entertainment, where none was :
 Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will ;
 The noblest mind the best contentment has.
 With faire discourse the evening so they pas : 230
 For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store,
 And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas,
 He told of saintes and popes, and evermore
 He strowd an Ave-Mary after and before.

The drouping night thus creepeth on them fast,
 And the sad humour loading their eye-liddes,
 As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
 Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleepe them biddes.
 Unto their lodgings then his guesstes he riddes :
 Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes, 240
 He to his studie goes, and there amiddes
 His magick bookes, and artes of sundry kindes,
 He seeks out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes.

The old man murmurs terrible incantations, and at his words
 Legions of Sprights flutter round his head. He chooses two—
 more false than all the rest—and keeping one beside him, he
 sends the other far beyond the depths of the sea to where
 ‘amid the bowels of the earth’, in the land where day never
 breaks, Morpheus lies drowsing under the black mantle of night.
 Here the messenger obtains ‘a fit false dream that can delude
 the sleepers’, and with this

Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke ;
 And on his little winges the dreame he bore
 In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

During his absence the foul enchanter, Archimago, has fashioned
 of the other Spright a lovely lady, in all respects resembling
 Una. By means of the lying dream and ‘that new creature’
 he persuades the Red Cross Knight that Una is faithless ; and
 both the Knight and the Dwarf forsake her. The Knight rides
 into the forest, where he meets with ‘a goodly Lady clad in scarlot
 red’. This is the false Duessa, a mighty witch who tries to

beguile all knights to their undoing. She takes him to the House of Pride, a stately palace in which the Lady Pride holds court, surrounded by the Deadly Sins. Here the Knight is entertained with great splendour, and lives in mirth and revelry. One day, however, it chances that the Dwarf finds his way to a dreadful dungeon beneath the Castle, wherein

huge numbers lay

Of caytive wretched thralls, that wayled night and day.
Aghast at this account of the horrors that are taking place under Pride's roof, the Knight escapes by a 'privy Posterne', and once more finds himself in the forest.

Meanwhile, Una, 'forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd', has been seeking him in vain.

One day nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight,
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secret shadow, far from all mens sight:
From her faire head her fillet she undight,
And laid her stole aside. Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven shyned bright, 250
And made a sunshine in the shadie place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

It fortun'd out of the thickest wood
A ramping lyon rushed suddainly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood;
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devour'd her tender corse:
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse, 260
And with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.
O how can beautie maister the most strong,

And simple truth subdue avenging wrong !
Whose yielded pride and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion,
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection. 270

‘The lyon, lord of everie beast in field,’
Quoth she, ‘his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him priekt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he my lyon, and my noble lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her that him lov’d, and ever most adord,
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?’
Redounding teares did choke th’ end of her plaint, 280
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;
And, sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.
At last in close hart shutting up her paine,
Arose the virgin borne of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy palfrey got againe
To seeke her strayed champion, if she might attaine.

The lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard 290
Of her chast person, and a faithfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still when she slept, he kept both watch and ward,
And when she wakt, he waited diligent,
With humble service to her will prepard:
From her faire eyes he tooke commandement,
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

With this protector she wanders in safety through the forest,

until at last the fierce Paynim, Sansloy, kills the lion and carries her away captive. She cries for help.

A troupe of Faunes and Satyres far away
Within the wood were dauncing in a rownd,
Whiles old Sylvanus slept in shady arber sownd: 300

Who when they heard that pitteous strained voice,
In haste forsooke their rurall merriment,
And ran towardes the far rebownded noyce,
To weet, what wight so loudly did lament.
Unto the place they come incontinent:
Whom when the raging Sarazin espide,
A rude, mishapen, monstrous rablement,
Whose like he never saw, he durst not bide,
But got his ready steed, and fast away gan ride.

The wyld wood gods arrived in the place, 310
There find the virgin dolefull desolate,
With ruffled rayments, and faire blubbred face,
As her outrageous foe had left her late;
And trembling yet through feare of former hate:
All stand amazed at so uncouth sight,
And gin to pittie her unhappie state;
All stand astonied at her beautie bright,
In their rude eyes unworthy of so wofull plight.

She, more amaz'd, in double dread doth dwell;
And every tender part for feare does shake: 320
As when a greedy wolfe, through hunger fell,
A seely lamb far from the flock does take,
Of whom he meanes his bloody feast to make,
A lyon spyes fast running towards him,
The innocent pray in hast he does forsake;
Which quitt from death yet quakes in every lim
With change of feare, to see the lyon looke so grim.

Such fearefull fit assaid her trembling hart ;
 Ne worde to speake, ne joynt to move she had :
 The salvage nation feele her secret smart, 330
 And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad ;
 Their frowning forheads with rough hornes yelad
 And rustick horror all aside doe lay ;
 And gently grenning, show a semblance glad
 To comfort her, and, feare to put away,
 Their backward bent knees teach her humbly to obey.

The doubtfull damzell dare not yet commit
 Her single person to their barbarous truth ;
 But still twixt feare and hope amaz'd does sit,
 Late learnd what harme to hasty trust ensu'th : 340
 They in compassion of her tender youth,
 And wonder of her beautie souveraine,
 Are wonne with pittie and unwonted ruth,
 And, all prostrate upon the lowly plaine,
 Do kisse her feete, and fawne on her with count'nance faine.

Their harts she ghesseeth by their humble guise,
 And yieldes her to extremitie of time ;
 So from the ground she fearlesse doth arise,
 And walketh forth without suspect of crime :
 They all as glad, as birdes of joyous prime, 350
 Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round,
 Shouting, and singing all a shepheards ryme,
 And with greene braunches strowing all the ground,
 Do worship her, as queene, with olive girlond croud.

Among this ' woodborne people ' she is found by the Knight,
 Satyrane, who brings her a false report of the Red Cross
 Knight's death.

Duessa also is seeking the Red Cross Knight. She finds him
 resting by a fountain, letting ' the breathing wind ' play over
 him as he listens to the plashing water and the song of the

birds. It is an enchanted stream, 'And all that drinke thereof do faint and feeble grow', but the Red Cross Knight knows nothing of this. He drinks, and then turns to pay 'goodly court' to Duessa, his armour laid aside, and every limb grown slack and heavy. At this moment there breaks on his ear

a dreadfull sownd,

Which through the wood loud bellowing did rebownd,
That all the earth for terror seemd to shake,

And trees did tremble,

and the giant, Orgoglio, son of Æolus and the Earth, rushes upon him. Weak and unprepared, the Knight falls an easy prey, and he is thrust into a loathsome dungeon, where he lies wounded and helpless.

The Dwarf, however, has escaped, and before long he meets Una. Together, they set out to find help, and they have not travelled far when they meet Prince Arthur, the noblest of all Gloriana's knights. He slays Orgoglio, and breaks into the Castle, where at first he can see no living creature. In vain he calls; no voice answers:

There raignd a solemne silence over all,
Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seene in bowre or hall.

At last, with creeping crooked pace forth came
An old old man, with beard as white as snow,
That on a staffe his feeble steps did frame,
And guide his wearie gate both too and fro ; 360
For his eye sight him failed long ygo:
And on his arme a bounch of keyes he bore,
The which unused rust did overgrow:
Those were the keyes of every inner dore ;
But he could not them use, but kept them still in store.

But very uncouth sight was to behold,
How he did fashion his untoward pace ;
For as he forward moov'd his footing old,
So backward still was turnd his wrinckled face:
Unlike to men, who ever as they trace,

370

Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.
 This was the auncient keeper of that place,
 And foster father of the gyant dead ;
 His name Ignaro did his nature right aread.

His reverend haires and holy gravitie
 The knight much honord, as beseemed well,
 And gently askt, where all the people bee,
 Which in that stately building wont to dwell.
 Who answerd him full soft, *he could not tell.*
 Again he askt, where that same knight was layd, 380
 Whom great Orgoglio with his puissaunce fell
 Had made his caytive thrall ; againe he sayde,
He could not tell : ne ever other answere made.

Then asked he, which way he in might pas :
He could not tell, againe he answered.
 Thereat the curteous knight displeased was,
 And said, ' Old sire, it seemes thou hast not red ¹
 How ill it sits with that same silver hed,
 In vaine to mocke, or mockt in vaine to bee :
 But if thou be, as thou art pourtrahed 390
 With natures pen, in ages grave degree,
 Aread in graver wise what I demaund of thee.'

His answere likewise was, *he could not tell.*
 Whose sencelesse speach, and doted ignorance,
 Whenas the noble prince had marked well,
 He ghest his nature by his countenance,
 And calm'd his wrath with goodly temperance.
 Then to him stepping, from his arme did reach
 Those keyes, and made himselfe free enterance.
 Each dore he opened without any breach ; 400
 There was no barre to stop, nor foe him to empeach.

¹ ' Considered ' (cf. ' aread ' = counsel, l. 684).

At last he finds the Red Cross Knight, but so wasted and faint that he can hardly stand.

Whom when his lady saw, to him she ran
 With hasty joy : to see him made her glad,
 And sad to view his visage pale and wan,
 Who earst in flowres of freshest youth was clad.
 Tho when her well of teares she wasted had,
 She said, ' Ah dearest lord, what evill starre
 On you hath frownd, and poud his influence bad,
 That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre, 409
 And this misseeming hew your manly looks doth marre ?

' But welcome now, my lord in wele or woe,
 Whose presence I have lackt too long a day ;
 And fie on Fortune, mine avowed foe,
 Whose wrathful wreaques themselves doe now alay ;
 And for these wrongs shall treble penaunce pay
 Of treble good : good growes of evils priefe¹.
 The chearelesse man, whom sorrow did dismay,
 Had no delight to treaten of his grieve ;
 His long endured famine needed more reliefe.

Una takes him to the House of Holiness, to be restored. Here they are received by Dame Caelia and her fair daughters Fidelia and Speranza, who instruct the Knight in ' celestiall discipline'. ' Bitter Penaunce', ' sharp Remorse', and ' sad Repentance' minister to him, until at last his wounds are healed, and Una brings him to the third sister, Charissa, who bids the ' auncient matrone', Mercy, take him to the ' holy Hospitall' near by, wherein the sick and poor are tended.

Thence forward by that painfull way they pas 420
 Forth to an hill, that was both steepe and hy ;
 On top whereof a sacred chappell was,
 And eke a little hermitage thereby,

¹ ' Proof'.

Wherein an aged holy man did lie,
 That day and night said his devotion,
 Ne other worldly busines did apply;
 His name was heavenly Contemplation;
 Of God and goodnesse was his meditation.

The old man shows him the steep and narrow path that leads
 to the New Jerusalem, and adds:

'Then seek this path, that I to thee presage,
 Which after all to heaven shall thee send; 430
 Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
 To yonder same Hierusalem do bend,
 Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end:
 For thou emongst those saints, whom thou doest see,
 Shalt be a saint, and thine owne nations frend
 And patrone: thou Saint George shalt called bee,
 Saint George of mery England, the signe of victoree.'

The Knight and Una proceed on their way. After several
 days' journey they reach Una's native country, where her
 parents are being held in siege by a fierce dragon. The Knight
 attacks the monster, and for three days the battle rages
 between them; at last the Knight is victorious, and the huge
 beast falls.

Behold I see the haven nigh at hand,
 To which I meane my wearie course to bend;
 Vere¹ the maine shete, and beare up with the land, 440
 The which afore is fairely to be kend,
 And seemeth safe from storms, that may offend:
 There this faire virgin wearie of her way
 Must landed be, now at her journeyes end:
 There eke my feeble barke a while may stay,
 Till merry wind and weather call her thence away.

¹ 'Let out'.

Scarsely had Phoebus in the glooming east
Yet harnessed his firie-footed teeme,
Ne reard above the earth his flaming creast;
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steeme, 450
That signe of last outbreathed life did seeme
Unto the watchman on the castle wall,
Who thereby dead that balefull beast did deeme,
And to his lord and lady lowd gan call,
To tell how he had seene the dragons fatall fall.

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed,
That aged sire, the lord of all that land,
And looked forth, to weet if true indeed
Those tydings were, as he did understand;
Which whenas true by tryall he out fond, 460
He bad to open wyde his brazen gate,
Which long time had beene shut, and out of hond
Proclaymed joy and peace through all his state;
For dead now was their foe, which them forrayed¹ late.

Then gan triumphant trompets sound on hie,
That sent to heaven the ecchoed report
Of their new joy, and happie victory
Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort²,
And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.
Then all the people, as in solemne feast, 470
To him assembled with one full consort,
Rejoycing at the fall of that great beast,
From whose eternall bondage now they were releast.

Forth came that auncient lord, and aged queene,
Arayd in antique robes downe to the ground,
And sad habiliments right well beseene:
A noble crew about them waited round
Of sage and sober peres, all gravely gownd;

¹ 'Ravaged'.

² 'Wrong'.

Whom far before did march a goodly band
 Of tall young men, all hable armes to sownd, 480
 But now they laurell braunches bore in hand ;
 Glad signe of victory and peace in all their land.

Unto that doughtie conquerour they came,
 And him before themselves prostrating low,
 Their lord and patrone loud did him proclame,
 And at his feet their laurell boughes did throw.
 Soone after them all dauncing on a row,
 The comely virgins came, with girlands dight,
 As fresh as flowres in meadow greene do grow,
 When morning deaw upon their leaves doth light ; 490
 And in their hands sweet timbrels all upheld on hight.

And, them before, the fry of children young
 Their wanton sportes and childish mirth did play,
 And to the maydens sounding tymbrels song,
 In well attuned notes, a joyous lay,
 And made delightfull musick all the way,
 Untill they came, where that faire virgin stood :
 As faire Diana in fresh sommers day
 Beholdes her nymphes enraung'd in shady wood,
 Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in christall
 flood : 500

So she beheld those maydens meriment
 With chearefull vew ; who when to her they came,
 Themselves to ground with gracious humblesse bent,
 And her ador'd by honorable name,
 Lifting to heaven her everlasting fame :
 Then on her head they set a girland greene,
 And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game :
 Who, in her self-resemblance well beseene,
 Did seeme, such as she was, a goodly maiden queene.

And after, all the raskall many ran,
Heaped together in rude rablement,
To see the face of that victorious man;
Whom all admired as from heaven sent,
And gaz'd upon with gaping wonderment.
But when they came where that dead dragon lay,
Stretcht on the ground in monstrous large extent,
The sight with idle feare did them dismay,
Ne durst approach him nigh, to touch, or once assay.

Some feard, and fled; some feard, and well it faynd;
One, that would wiser seeme then all the rest,
Warnd him not touch, for yet perhaps remaynd
Some lingring life within his hollow brest,
Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest
Of many dragonets, his fruitfull seed;
Another said, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparckling fire, and bad thereof take heed;
Another said, he saw him move his eyes indeed.

One mother, whenas her foolehardy chyld
Did come too neare, and with his talants play,
Halfe dead through feare, her litle babe revyld,
And to her gossips gan in counsell say:
'How can I tell, but that his talants may
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand?'
So diversly themselves in vaine they fray;
Whiles some, more bold, to measure him nigh stand,
To prove how many acres he did spread of land.

Thus flocked all the folke him round about;
The whiles that hoarie king, with all his traine,
Being arrived where that champion stout
After his foes defeasance did remaine,
Him goodly greetes, and faire does entertaine

With princely gifts of yvory and gold,
And thousand thanks him yeeldes for all his paine.
Then when his daughter deare he does behold,
He dearely doth imbrace, and kisseth manifold.

And after to his pallace he them brings,
With shaumes, and trompets, and with clarions sweet ;
And all the way the joyous people singes,
And with their garments strowes the paved street ;
Whence mounting up, they find purveyaunce meet 550
Of all, that royall princes court became ;
And all the floore was underneath their feet
Bespred with costly scarlot of great name,
On which they lowly sit, and fitting purpose frame.

What needs me tell their feast and goodly guize,
In which was nothing riotous nor vaine ?
What needes of dainty dishes to devise,
Of comely services, or courtly trayne,
My narrow leaves cannot in them containe
The large discourse of royall princes state. 560
Yet was their manner then but bare and plaine ;
For th' antique world excesse and pride did hate :
Such proud luxurious pompe is swollen up but late.

Then when with meates and drinckes of every kinde
Their fervent appetites they quenched had,
That auncient lord gan fit occasion finde,
Of straunge adventures, and of perils sad
Which in his travell him befallen had,
For to demaund of his renowned guest :
Who then with utt'rance grave, and count'nance sad, 570
From point to point, as is before exprest,
Discourst his voyage long, according his request.

Great pleasures, mixt with pittiful regard,
 That godly king and queene did passionate,
 Whiles they his pittifull adventures heard ;
 That oft they did lament his lucklesse state,
 And often blame the too importune fate
 That heaped on him so many wrathfull wreakes :
 For never gentle knight, as he of late,
 So tossed was in fortunes cruell freakes ; 580
 And all the while salt teares bedewd the hearers cheeks.

Then sayd that royall pere in sober wise :
 ' Deare sonne, great beene the evils which ye bore
 From first to last in your late enterprise,
 That I note whether praise or pittie more :
 For never living man, I weene, so sore
 In sea of deadly daungers was distrest ;
 But since now safe ye seised have the shore,
 And well arrived are (high God be blest)
 Let us devise of ease and everlasting rest.' 590

' Ah, dearest lord,' said then that doughty knight,
 ' Of ease or rest I may not yet devise ;
 For by the faith, which I to armes have plight,
 I bounden am streight after this emprise,
 As that your daughter can ye well advize,
 Backe to returne to that great Faerie Queene,
 And her to serve sixe yeares in warlike wize,
 Gainst that proud paynim king that works her teene¹ :
 Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there have beene.'

' Unhappy falls that hard necessity,' 600
 (Quoth he) ' the troubler of my happy peace,
 And vowed foe of my felicity ;
 Ne I against the same can justly preace² :
 But since that band ye cannot now release,

¹ 'Sorrow': cf. n. 4, l. 32.

² 'Plead' (lit. 'urge').

Nor doen undo ; (for vowes may not be vaine,)
 Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall cease,
 Ye then shall hither backe returne againe,
 The marriage to accomplish vowd betwixt you twain :

‘ Which for my part I covet to performe,
 In sort as through the world I did proclame, 610
 That whoso kild that monster most deforme,
 And him in hardy battaile overcame,
 Should have mine onely daughter to his dame,
 And of my kingdome heyre apparaunt bee :
 Therefore since now to thee pertaines the same,
 By dew desert of noble chevalree,
 Both daughter and eke kingdome, lo I yield to thee.’

Then forth he called that his daughter faire,
 The fairest Un’ his onely daughter deare,
 His onely daughter, and his onely heyre ; 620
 Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheare,
 As bright as doth the morning starre appeare
 Out of the east, with flaming lockes bedight,
 To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
 And to the world does bring long wished light :
 So faire and fresh that lady shewd her selfe in sight :

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in May ;
 For she had layd her mournfull stole aside,
 And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,
 Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did hide ; 630
 Whiles on her wearie journey she did ride ;
 And on her now a garment she did weare
 All lilly white, withoutten spot or pride,
 That seemd like silke and silver woven neare,
 But neither silke nor silver therein did appeare.

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame,
And glorious light of her sunshyny face,
To tell, were as to strive against the streame:
My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace
Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace. 640
Ne wonder; for her own deare loved knight,
All were she dayly with himselfe in place,
Did wonder much at her celestiall sight:
Oft had he seene her faire, but never so faire dight.

So fairely dight, when she in presence came,
She to her sire made humble reverence,
And bowed low, that her right well became,
And added grace unto her excellence:
Who with great wisdom and grave eloquence
Thus gan to say. But eare he thus had said, 650
With flying speede, and seeming great pretence,
Came running in, much like a man dismaid,
A messenger with letters, which his message said.

All in the open hall amazed stood
At suddeinnesse of that unwary sight,
And wondred at his breathlesse hasty mood:
But he for nought would stay his passage right,
Till fast before the king he did alight;
Where falling flat, great humblesse he did make,
And kist the ground, whereon his foot was pight¹; 660
Then to his hands that writ he did betake,
Which he disclosing, read thus, as the paper spake:

'To thee, most mighty king of Eden faire,
Her greeting sends in these sad lines addrest
The wofull daughter, and forsaken heire
Of that great emperour of all the West;

¹ 'Planted'.

And bids thee be advized for the best,
 Ere thou thy daughter linck in holy band
 Of wedlocke to that new unknowen guest :
 For he already plighted his right hand 670
 Unto another love, and to another land.

'To me, sad mayd, or rather widow sad,
 He was affiaunced long time before,
 And sacred pledges he both gave, and had,
 False erraunt knight, infamous, and forswore :
 Witnesse the burning altars, which he swore,
 And guilty heavens of his bold perjury,
 Which though he hath polluted off of yore,
 Yet I to them for judgment just do fly,
 And them conjure t'avenge this shamefull injury. 680

'Therefore since mine he is, or free or bond,
 Or false or trew, or living or else dead,
 Withhold, O soveraine prince, your hasty hond
 From knitting league with him, I you aread ;
 Ne weene my right with strength adowne to tread,
 Through weaknesse of my widowhed, or woe ;
 For truth is strong her rightfull cause to plead,
 And shall finde friends, if need requireth soe.
 So bids thee well to fare, Thy neither friend nor foe.

Fidessa.'

When he these bitter byting wordes had red, 690
 The tydings straunge did him abashed make,
 That still he sate long time astonished,
 As in great muse, ne word to creature spake.
 At last his solemne silence thus he brake,
 With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his guest :
 'Redoubted knight, that for mine onely sake
 Thy life and honour late adventarest,
 Let nought be hid from me, that ought to be exprest.

'What meane these bloody vowes and idle threats,
Throwne out from womanish impatient mind? 700
What heavens? what altars? what enraged heates,
Here heaped up with termes of love unkind,
My conscience cleare with guilty bands would bind?
High God be witnesse, that I guiltlesse ame.
But if yourselfe, sir knight, ye faulty find,
Or wrapped be in loves of former dame,
With crime doe not it cover, but disclose the same.'

To whom the Redcrosse knight this answere sent:
'My lord, my king, be nought hereat dismayd,
Till well ye wote by grave intendiment, 710
What woman, and wherefore doth me upbrayd
With breach of love and loyalty betrayd.
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately traveild, that unwares I strayd
Out of my way, through perils straunge and hard;
That day should faile me, ere I had them all declar'd.

'There did I find, or rather I was found
Of this false woman, that Fidessa hight,
Fidessa hight the falsest dame on ground,
Most false Duessa¹, royall richly dight, 720
That easy was to inveigle weaker sight:
Who by her wicked arts and wylie skill,
Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared ill.'

Then stepped forth the goodly royall mayd,
And on the ground her selfe prostrating low,
With sober countenaunce thus to him sayd:
'O pardon me, my souveraine lord, to show
The secret treasons, which of late I know 730

¹ See above, pp. 254-5.

To have bene wrought by that false sorceresse.
 She, onely she, it is, that earst did throw
 This gentle knight into so great distresse,
 That death him did awaite in dayly wretchednesse.

‘ And now it seemes, that she suborned hath
 This crafty messenger with letters vaine,
 To worke new woe and unprovided scath,
 By breaking of the band betwixt us twaine ;
 Wherein she used hath the practicke paine¹
 Of this false footman, clokt with simplenesse, 740
 Whom if ye please for to discover plaine,
 Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse,
 The falsest man alive ; who tries, shall find no lesse.’

The King was greatly moved at her speach,
 And, all with suddein indignation fraight²,
 Bad on that messenger rude hands to reach.
 Eftsoones the gard, which on his state did wait,
 Attacht that faitor false, and bound him strait :
 Who seeming sorely chauffed at his band,
 As chained beare, whom cruell dogs do bait, 750
 With idle force did faine them to withstand :
 And often semblaunce made to scape out of their hand.

But they him layd full low in dungeon deepe,
 And bound him hand and foote with yron chains :
 And with continual watch did warely keepe.
 Who then would thinke, that by his subtile trains
 He could escape fowle death or deadly pains ?
 Thus when that princes wrath was pacifide,
 He gan renew the late forbidden baines³,
 And to the knight his daughter dear he tyde 760
 With sacred rites and vowes for ever to abyde.

¹ i.e. works of deceit (practicke = deceitful).

³ ‘Banns of marriage’.

² ‘Fraught’.

His owne two hands the holy knots did knit,
That none but death for ever can divide ;
His owne two hands, for such a turne most fit,
The housling¹ fire did kindle and provide,
And holy water thereon sprinkled wide ;
At which the bushy teade² a groome did light,
And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
Where it should not be quenched day nor night,
For feare of evill fates, but burnen ever bright. 770

Then gan they sprinkle all the posts with wine,
And made great feast to solemnize that day ;
They all perfumde with frankincense divine,
And precious odours fetcht from far away,
That all the house did sweat with great aray :
And all the while sweete musicke did apply
Her curious skill, the warbling notes to play,
To drive away the dull melancholy ;
The whiles one sung a song of love and jollity.

During the which there was an heavenly noise 780
Heard sound through all the pallace pleasantly,
Like as it had bene many an angels voice
Singing before th' eternall Majesty,
In their trinall triplicities on hye ;
Yet wist no creature whence that heavenly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly
Himselfe thereby reft of his sences meet,
And ravished with rare impression in his sprite.

Great joy was made that day of young and old,
And solemne feast proclaime throughout the land, 790
That their exceeding merth may not be told :
Suffice it heare by signes to understand

¹ 'Sacramental'.² 'Torch'.

The usuall joyes at knitting of loves band.
 Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did hold,
 Possessed of his ladies hart and hand ;
 And ever, when his eye did her behold,
 His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold.

Her joyous presence, and sweet company,
 In full content he there did long enjoy ;
 Ne wicked envy, ne vile gealosy, 800
 His deare delights were able to annoy :
 Yet swimming in that sea of blissfull joy,
 He nought forgot how he whilome had sworne,
 In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
 Unto his Faerie Queene backe to returne ;
 The which he shortly did, and Una left to mourne.

Now strike your sailes ye jolly Mariners,
 For we be come unto a quiet rode¹,
 Where we must land some of our passengers,
 And light this weary vessell of her lode. 810
 Here she a while may make her safe abode,
 Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
 And wants supplide. And then againe abroad
 On the long voyage whereto she is bent :
 Well may she speede, and fairely finish her intent.

¹ 'Anchorage' (cf. 'roadstead').

FROM 'THE EPITHALAMION'

OPEN the temple gates unto my love,
 Open them wide that she may enter in,
 And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
 And all the pillours deck with garlands trim,
 For to receive this Saynt with honour dew,
 That cometh in to you.

With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
 She cometh in before th' Almighty's view ;
 Of her ye virgins learne obedience,
 When so ye come into those holy places,

10

To humble your proud faces :
 Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
 The sacred ceremonies there partake,
 The which do endlesse matrimony make ;
 And let the roring Organs loudly play
 The praises of the Lord in lively notes ;
 The whiles, with hollow throates,
 The Choristers the joyous Antheme sing,
 That al the woods may answere, and their eccho ring.

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
 Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,
 And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
 How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
 And the pure snow, with goodly vermill stayne,

20

Like crimsin dyde in grayne,
 That even th' Angels, which continually
 About the sacred Altare doe remaine,
 Forget their service and about her fly,
 Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fayre
 The more they on it stare

But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
Are governèd with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing, ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere, and your eccho ring.

CHAPTER XI

ELIZABETHAN SONNETS AND SONGS

Among the forms of poetry, other than dramatic, which held sway during the Elizabethan age, the two of widest domain were the song and the sonnet. The conditions under which they flourished, and the indications of literary progress which they afford, are so widely different that they must needs be considered separately.

The sonnet, as we have seen, was acclimatized from Italy by Sir Thomas Wyatt. After him Surrey employed the form, with some changes of treatment; then, about the middle of the sixteenth century, came Thomas Watson, whose work in spirit, though not in form, is a close and almost slavish imitation of Italian models. In 1591 this intermittent attention and practice was aroused to enthusiasm by the publication of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*. Between that year and 1597 the number of English sonnets may literally be counted by the thousand¹. Daniel's first collection appeared in 1592, his *Delia* in the same year, which also saw the publication of Constable's *Diana*. In 1593 followed Barnes' *Parthenophil*, a new collection by Watson, Giles Fletcher's *Licia*, and Lodge's *Phyllis*, each containing from forty to a hundred examples of the form. Next year increased the store with Drayton's *Idea*, Percy's *Celia*, and the collection called *Zephiria* of unknown authorship; in 1595 came Barnefield's *Ganymede*, Spenser's *Amoretti*, and other volumes,

¹ For a complete account of these, and a full discussion of Shakespeare's sonnets, see Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, chapters vii to x, and Appendix ix.

including a famous set of parodies by Sir John Davies; in 1596 more books by Linche, Griffin, Campion, and William Smith; in 1597 Tofte's *Laura*; while during the same period were written the sonnets of Alexander, published in 1604, those of Shakespeare, published in 1609, and those of Fulke Greville, published in 1633. Even these do not exhaust the catalogue, but they are enough to show the prevalence of a fashion to which almost every considerable man of letters in England gave adherence. To this sudden outburst there is nothing comparable in the history of our literature; unless it be that vogue of the novel which at the present day is threatening to oust all other kinds of artistic effort.

The form, as established by Petrarch, consisted of fourteen lines, divided unequally into two groups of eight and six. In the former group only two rhymes were allowed, and they were invariably set on a pattern which may be mechanically represented by the letters *a b b a a b b a*. The latter group might have two rhymes or three, according to the fancy of the writer, and might arrange them in any order that he pleased.¹ This plan was not followed by the English writers with exact precision. In a minority of cases the limit of fourteen lines was transcended; in a large majority the groups were disposed after other patterns. Sidney, who follows Petrarch with a difference in Sonnets xxxi and xli, elsewhere allows his rhymes to fall where they list; Spenser writes with his ear filled by the cadence of his own favourite stanza; Shakespeare prefers a scheme of three quatrains with a final couplet, which, intrinsically the least beautiful of all, is well suited to the purposes of a forcible or epigrammatic climax. Indeed, in many cases our Elizabethan sonnets were

¹ Thus in Petrarch's thirty-ninth sonnet the sextain has two rhymes, in the fortieth it has three. His form may be illustrated, in English poetry, by the habitual practice of Milton and Wordsworth.

affected by the tone and temper of the epigram, and at the most passionate, often concentrated their point on a 'conceit' in the final couplet.¹

The sonnet, then, was an artificial form brought into prominence by the fashion of a few years. This does not preclude the fact that its best examples attained a very high level of poetic value. With this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart; to this instrument Sidney and Spenser confided their passion, and Drayton, for one inspired moment, set vibrating the inmost chords of our common nature. For all its artifice, the form offers a just scope to concise and poignant expression: it stands to ode and epic as the repressed metres of Catullus to the flowing lines of Ovid and Virgil: it takes the due rank which, in one of its most famous examples, Wordsworth vindicated for it. The laws of the fugue are, in a sense, precise and technical, but they served for the poetry of the Well-tempered Clavichord.

Yet still more beautiful are the native wood-notes of Elizabethan song. In our sixteenth century almost every educated Englishman was a musician: after dinner the part-books were handed round as a matter of course, and the man who could not take his second-tenor in a madrigal felt that he was disgraced, and betook himself to Thomas Morley for instruction. Our composers were among the greatest in Europe—Weelkes and Wilbye and Dowland, Byrd and Morley and Orlando Gibbons; to the *Triumphs of Oriana* more than twenty men contributed, and every work is a masterpiece. It is little wonder that song should flourish in such an atmosphere; that the seeds of poetry, watered and nourished by the sister art, should break forth into

¹ It may be worth noticing that Petrarch, whose sonnets are not marked by this epigrammatic quality, carefully avoids placing a couplet at the end.

lyric blossoms. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the outburst of German music brought with it Gellert and Heine and Lenau and Eichendorf and Chamisso: in poetry, at least, our golden age can match them with the songs of Sidney and Shakespeare, of Fletcher and Jonson, of Campion and Heywood and Wither. The only difficulty is that of selection: the wealth is so great that the full hand leaves it almost untouched. At no period in our literature has the voice of England found expression in strains of such pure and spontaneous loveliness.

SONNETS AND SONGS

[Most of the authors here cited were principally celebrated as dramatists, and the consideration of their work belongs to the next volume. For William Browne and Michael Drayton, see ch. xiii, pp. 338 and 348.]

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586), eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney, was born at Penshurst and named after his godfather, Philip II. In 1564 he went to Shrewsbury, in 1568 to Christ Church, Oxford, where he resided until 1571. For the next four years he travelled widely throughout Europe: he was in Paris at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), and saw much of court life in Italy, Austria, and Poland. Shortly after his return to England (1575) he fell in love with the Lady Penelope, daughter of Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, for whom he wrote during the next ten years the collection of 108 sonnets and eleven songs entitled *Astrophel and Stella*. In 1580 he made acquaintance with Spenser at Leicester House, became a member of the Areopagus Club, and in 1581 wrote the *Apologie for Poetrie* in answer to Stephen Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse* which, by an odd irony, had been dedicated to him. Meanwhile he had obtained a small office at the English court, but he offended Elizabeth partly by quarrelling with the Earl of Oxford (who, it may be added, was the aggressor), and still more by writing an appeal against her proposed marriage with

the Duke of Anjou. Accordingly in 1580 he retired for a few months to Wilton, where he began his *Arcadia*, a romance written at intervals for the amusement of his sister the Countess of Pembroke, and finished in 1583. He was back in London before the end of 1580; in 1581 he sat as M.P. for Kent; in 1583 he received the order of knighthood, and married Frances, daughter of Sir Thomas Walsingham. In 1585 England, as ally of the Netherlands, declared war on Spain and sent over to Holland an army with Leicester in chief command and Sidney as Governor of Flushing. The winter and spring passed without event; in July, 1586, Sidney took a chief part in the capture of Axel, on Sept. 22 he was mortally wounded at Zutphen, and on Oct. 17 he died. Over 700 mourners attended his funeral to St. Paul's, over 200 elegies were written in his honour, and we are told that for many months after his death 'it was accounted a sin for any gentleman of quality to wear gay apparel'.

Not one of his important works was printed in his lifetime. The *Arcadia* first appeared in 1590, *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591, the *Apologie for Poetrie* in 1595. But if his genius was recognized by a few friends alone, his life lay open to all, and the sorrow caused by his premature death was a fitting tribute to one of the noblest and best-beloved among Englishmen.

SAMUEL DANIEL (1562-1619) was born near Taunton, and educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. After leaving the University he became tutor to Lady Anne Clifford, afterwards Countess of Pembroke. In 1592 he published the first edition of his *Sonnets to Delia*, augmented two years later to the number of 57. In 1595 appeared the first four books of his poem on the Wars of the Roses: in 1597 his *Tragedy of Philotas*: in 1599 *Musophilus* and other poetical essays: in 1599 and 1602 the fifth and sixth books of his *Civil Warres*. Two of his prose writings deserve mention:—the *Defence of Ryme* (1607), in answer to Campion, and the *Collection of the History of England* (1613 and 1618), a survey of English history from Roman Britain to the reign of Richard III. Most of his work was written under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke, and it was to Mary Countess of Pembroke (sister of Sir Philip Sidney) that the *Delia* sonnets were dedicated.

THOMAS CAMPION (1567?-1619) studied at Cambridge and at Gray's Inn, deserted the Law for Medicine, and took his degree as Doctor of Physic. His *First Book of Airs*, written in collaboration with Philip Rosseter, appeared about 1601: in 1602 he wrote his *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*, a defence of unrhymed verse with illustrative examples: in 1606 he wrote a masque for Lord Hayes, about 1613 he published his *Second Book of Airs*, and three more masques in which some of his best songs are included: shortly afterwards appeared his volume of *Divine and Moral Songs*, and the *Third and Fourth Books of Airs* followed in 1617. He was a skilled musician, author of a Treatise on Counterpoint, and wrote his finest lyrics with a direct view to their musical setting.

RICHARD BARNEFIELD (1574-1627) was born at Norbury in Staffordshire, and educated at Brasenose College, Oxford. On leaving the University he spent some years in London, as a member of the literary circle which centred round Lady Rich—the 'Stella' of Sir Philip Sidney. In 1605 he retired to his country-house in Staffordshire, and there spent the rest of his life. His principal works are the *Affectionate Shepherd* (1594), *Cynthia, with certaine Sonnets and the Legend of Cassandra* (1595), and the *Encomium of the Lady Pecunia* (1598). At least two of his poems—the sonnet here quoted, and the lyric 'As it fell upon a day'—have been attributed to Shakespeare.

GEORGE WITHER (1588-1667) was born at Bentworth in Hampshire, and educated at Oxford. In 1612 he contributed, as did Chapman, Browne, and other poets, to the collection of elegies published on the death of Prince Henry: in 1613 he printed *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, a collection of vigorous satires for which he was imprisoned in the Marshalsea. During his imprisonment he wrote a set of pastorals entitled *The Shepherd's Hunting*, and a *Satire to the King* in justification of his earlier collection. In 1622 he published a volume of miscellaneous poems under the title of *Juvenilia*, and wrote a long allegorical work, *Faire Virtue, the Mistress of Philarete*, which includes the lyric here quoted. In 1628 he published *Britain's Remembrancer* (a poem on the recent outbreak of the plague), which was followed by his metrical translation of the *Psalms* in 1632, his book of *Emblems* in 1635, and *Britain's Second Remembrancer* in

1641. He fought on the Parliament's side in the Civil War, and in 1655 wrote a poem on Cromwell's acceptance of the Protectorship. He died in 1667, aged 79.

SONNETS

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

(From *Astrophel and Stella*)

VII

WHEN Nature made her chief work, Stella's eyes,
In colour black why wrapt she beams so bright?
Would she, in beamy black, like Painter wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mixt of shade and light?
Or did she else that sober hue devise—
In object best to knit and strength our sight,
Lest if no veil these brave gleams did disguise,
They, sunlike, should more dazzle than delight?
Or would she her miraculous power show,
That, whereas black seems Beauty's contrary, 10
She even in black doth make all beauties flow?
Both so and thus—she, minding Love should be
Placed ever there, gave him this mourning weed
To honour all their deaths that for him bleed.

XXXI

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heav'nly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case.
I read it in thy looks,—thy languished grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit? 10

Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
 Do they above love to be loved, and yet
 Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
 Do they call 'virtue' there—ungratefulness?

XXXIX

Come, sleep! O sleep, the certain knot of peace,
 The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
 The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
 Th' indifferent judge between the high and low,
 With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
 Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw!
 O make in me those civil wars to cease!
 I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
 Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
 A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light, 10
 A rosy garland and a weary head;
 And if these things, as being thine by right,
 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
 Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

XLI

HAVING this day my horse, my hand, my lance
 Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
 Both by the judgement of the English eyes,
 And of some sent from that sweet enemy France,
 Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
 Town-folks my strength,—a daintier judge applies
 His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise,—
 Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;—
 Others, because of both sides I do take
 My blood from them who did excel in this, 10
 Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.
 How far they shot away! The true cause is

Stella looked on, and from her heav'nly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

LXIX

O JOY too high for my low style to show!
O bliss fit for a nobler state than me!
Envy, put out thine eyes, lest thou do see
What oceans of delight in me do flow!
My friend that oft saw, through all masks, my woe,
Come, come, and let me pour myself on thee!
Gone is the Winter of my misery;
My Spring appears: O see what here doth grow!
For Stella hath, with words where faith doth shine,
Of her high heart giv'n me the monarchy: 10
I, I, oh I may say that she is mine:
And though she give but thus conditionally
This realm of bliss, while virtuous course I take,
No kings be crowned but they some covenants make.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552 ?-1599)

(From *Amoretti*)

LXVII

LYKE as a huntsman after weary chace,
Seeing the game from him escapt away,
Sits down to rest him in some shady place,
With panting hounds beguiled of their pray;
So after long pursuit and vaine assay,
When I all weary had the chace forsooke,
The gentle deare returned the self-same way,
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke:
There she, beholding me with mylder looke,
Sought not to fly but fearelesse still did bide; 10
Till I in hand her yet half trembling tooke,
And with her owne goodwill her fymely tyde.

Strange thing, me seemd, to see a beast so wyld
 So goodly wonne, with her owne will beguyld.

LXVIII

Most glorious Lord of lyfe ! that, on this day,
 Didst make thy triumph over death and sin ;
 And, having harrowd hell, didst bring away
 Captivity thence captive, us to win :
 This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin ;
 And grant that we for whom thou diddest dye,
 Being with thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
 May live for ever in felicity !
 And that thy love we weighing worthily,
 May likewise love thee for the same againe ; 10
 And for thy sake, that all lyke deare didst buy,
 With love may one another entertayne.
 So let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought :
 Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

LXXV

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
 But came the waves and washèd it away ;
 Agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
 But came the tyde and made my paynes his pray ;
 ' Vayne man,' said she, ' that dost in vaine assay
 A mortal thing so to immortalize,
 For I myself shall lyke to this decay,
 And eek my name bee wyped out lykewize.'
 ' Not so,' quod I ; ' let baser things devize
 To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame : 10
 My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
 And in the hevens wryte your glorious name.
 Where, whenas death shall all the world subdew,
 Our love shall live and later life renew.'

LXXXI

FAYRE is my love when her fayre golden heares
With the loose wind ye waving chance to marke ;
Fayre when the rose in her red cheekes appeares,
Or in her eyes the fyre of love does sparke ;
Fayre when her brest, lyke a rich laden barke,
With pretious merchandize she forth doth lay ;
Fayre when that cloud of pryde, which oft doth dark
Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away :
But fayrest she when so she doth display
The gate, with pearles and rubyes richly dight, 10
Through which her words so wise do make their way
To beare the message of her gentle spright.
The rest be works of nature's wonderment ;
But this the worke of harts astonishment.

LXXXII

Joy of my life ! full oft for loving you
I blesse my lot that was so lucky placed ;
But then the more your owne mishap I rew,
That are so much by so meane love embased.
For, had the equal heavens so much you graced
In this as in the rest, ye mote invent
Some hevenly wit, whose verse could have enchased
Your glorious name in golden moniment.
But, since ye deign'd so goodly to relent
To me, your thrall, in whom is little worth, 10
That little that I am shall all be spent
In setting your immortall prayses forth :
Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,
Shall lift you up unto an high degree.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE¹ (1564-1616)

XXIX

WHEN in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possessed.
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet, in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee—and then my state 10
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate:
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

LXXIII

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves or none or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

¹ The majority of Shakespeare's sonnets were probably written in 1598-4, the year in which he published *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. They were first printed (surreptitiously) by Thomas Thorpe, in 1609. See Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, chap. vii.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

CIV

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For, as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green.
Ah ! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived ! 10
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived :
For fear of which hear this, thou age unbred,
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

CXVI

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove :
O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown although his height betaken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ; 10
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CLIV

THE little Love-god, lying once asleep,
 Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
 Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep
 Came tripping by ; but in her maiden hand
 The fairest votary took up that fire,
 Which many legions of true hearts had warmed,
 And so the general of hot desire
 Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarmed.
 This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
 Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual, 10
 Growing a bath and healthful remedy
 For men diseased : but I, my mistress' thrall,
 Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,—
 Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

SAMUEL DANIEL (1562-1619)

(TO DELIA, LI)

CARE-CHARMER Sleep, son of the sable Night,
 Brother to Death, in silent darkness born :
 Relieve my anguish and restore the light,
 With dark forgetting of my care return,
 And let the day be time enough to mourn
 The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth :
 Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
 Without the torment of the night's untruth.
 Cease, dreams, the images of day desires,
 To model forth the passions of the morrow ;
 Never let rising sun approve you liars, 10
 To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
 Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
 And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

RICHARD BARNEFIELD (1574-1627)

If music and sweet poetry agree,
 As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
 Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
 Because thou lov'st the one and I the other.
 Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
 Upon the lute doth ravish human sense ;
 Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
 As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.
 Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
 That Phoebus' lute, the queen of music, makes ; 10
 And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd
 Whenas himself to singing he betakes.
 One god is god of both, as poets feign ;
 One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1568-1631)

SINCE there's no help, come, let us kiss and part,—
 Nay ! I have done, you get no more of me ;
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
 Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
 And, when we meet at any time again,
 Be it not seen in either of our brows
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
 When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies, 10
 When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And innocence is closing up his eyes,—
 Now if thou wouldst, when all have giv'n him over,
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

SONGS

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

THE BARGAIN

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,

By just exchange one to the other given :

I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,

There never was a better bargain driven :

My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,

My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides :

He loves my heart for once it was his own,

I cherish his because in me it bides :

My true love hath my heart, and I have his. 10

ANONYMOUS

REST

(From John Dowland's *Third Book of Songs or Aires*, 1603)

WEEP you no more, sad fountains,

What need you flow so fast ?

Look how the snowy mountains

Heaven's sun doth gently waste.

But my sun's heavenly eyes

View not your weeping,

That now lies sleeping

Softly, now softly lies

Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling,

A rest that peace begets ;

Doth not the sun rise smiling

When fair at eve he sets ?

10

Rest you then, rest, sad eyes,
Melt not in weeping,
While she lies sleeping
Softly, now softly lies
Sleeping.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593).

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

COME live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Or woods or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies ;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

10

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull ;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs ;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

20

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning :
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

SERENADE

(From *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

Who is Silvia? What is she,
 That all our swains commend her?
 Holy, fair, and wise is she;
 The heaven such grace did lend her,
 That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
 For beauty lives with kindness:
 Love doth to her eyes repair,
 To help him of his blindness;
 And, being help'd, inhabits there.

10

Then to Silvia let us sing
 That Silvia is excelling;
 She excels each mortal thing
 Upon the dull earth dwelling:
 To her let us garlands bring.

LULLABY

(From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blind-worms do no wrong;
 Come not near our fairy queen.

Philomel with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
 Never harm,
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So good night, with lullaby.

10

Weaving spiders come not here ;
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence !
Beetle black approach not near ;
Worm nor snail do no offence.

Philomel with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby :
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So good night, with lullaby.

20

DIRGE

(From *Twelfth Night*)

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid ;
Fly away, fly away, breath,
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it !
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown ;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corse, where my bones shall be thrown :
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O ! where
Sad true lover never find my grave
To weep there.

10

AUBADE

(From *Cymbeline*)

HARK ! hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies ;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes :
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise !
Arise, arise !

DIRGE

(From *The Tempest*)

FULL fathom five thy father lies ;
Of his bones are coral made :
Those are pearls that were his eyes ;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :—
Hark ! now I hear them—Ding dong, bell !

JOHN WEBSTER (about 1630)

DIRGE

(From *Vittoria Corombona*)

CALL for the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,

To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And (when gay tombs are robbed) sustain no harm :
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again. 10

THOMAS CAMPION (1567?-1619)

O COME QUICKLY

NEVER weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more,
Than my wearied sprite now longs to fly out of my
troubled breast :

O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soul to rest !

Ever blooming are the joys of heaven's high Paradise,
Cold age deafs not there our ears, nor vapour dims our eyes :
Glory there the sun outshines, whose beams the Blessed
only see :

O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my sprite to thee !

FOLLOW YOUR SAINT

FOLLOW your saint, follow with accents sweet !
Haste you, sad notes, fall at her flying feet !
There, wrapt in cloud of sorrow, pity move,
And tell the ravisher of my soul I perish for her love ;
But if she scorns my never-ceasing pain,
Then burst with sighing in her sight and ne'er return again !

All that I sung still to her praise did tend ;
Still she was first, still she my songs did end ;
Yet she my love and music both doth fly,
The music that her echo is and beauty's sympathy. 10
Then let my notes pursue her scornful flight :—
It shall suffice that they were breathed and died for her
delight.

LAURA

ROSE-CHEEK'D Laura, come ;
Sing thou smoothly, with thy beauty's
Silent music, either other
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From concent divinely framed ;
Heav'n is music, and thy beauty's
Birth is heav'nly.

These dull notes we sing,
Discords need for helps to grace them ; 10
Only beauty, purely loving,
Knows no discord,
But still moves delight,
Like clear springs renewed by flowing,
Ever perfect, ever in them-
Selves eternal.

BEN JONSON (1573-1637)

HYMN TO DIANA

QUEEN and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep :
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.
Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose ;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heav'n to clear, when day did close. 10
Bless us then with wished sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night—
Goddess excellently bright.

THOMAS HEYWOOD (1580?-1650?)

PACK, CLOUDS, AWAY

PACK, clouds, away! and welcome, day!
With night we banish sorrow:
Sweet air, blow soft; mount, lark, aloft,
To give my love good-morrow!
Wings from the wind to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow:
Bird, prune thy wing! nightingale, sing!
To give my love good-morrow!
Notes from them all I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin red-breast!
Sing, birds, in every furrow!
And from each bill let music shrill
Give my fair love good-morrow!
Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, among yourselves
Sing my fair love good-morrow!
Sing, birds, in every furrow.

JOHN FLETCHER (1579-1625)

ASPATIA'S SONG

LAY a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew ;
Maiden, willow-branches bear ;
Say I died true.
My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth :
Upon my buried body lie
Lightly, gentle earth !

GEORGE WITHER (1588-1667)

THE MANLY HEART

SHALL I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair ?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are ?
Be she fairer than the day
Or the flow'ry meads in May,
If she think not well of me,
What care I how fair she be ?

Shall my silly heart be pined
'Cause I see a woman kind ?
Or a well-disposed nature
Joined with a lovely feature ?
Be she meeker, kinder than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how kind she be ?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love ?

Or her well-deservings known
Make me quite forget my own? 20
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of best,
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that bears a noble mind,
If not outward helps she find,
Thinks what with them he would do
That without them dares her woo; 30
And unless that mind I see,
What care I how great she be?

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she love me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be? 40

W. BROWNE (1590-1643?)

SONG

For her gait if she be walking,
Be she sitting I desire her
For her state's sake, and admire her
For her wit if she be talking.
Gait and state and wit approve her;
For which all and each I love her.

Be she sullen, I commend her
For a modest. Be she merry,
For a kind one her prefer I.
Briefly, everything doth lend her 10
So much grace and so approve her,
That for everything I love her.

EPITAPH ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER
OF PEMBROKE

UNDERNEATH this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse ;
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother :
Death, ere thou hast slain another,
Fair, and learn'd, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

CHAPTER XII

ELIZABETHAN PROSE

THE prose of the Elizabethan period may roughly be classified under three heads: the Euphuistic style of Lyly, and of the authors whom he specially influenced; the scholarly and statesmanlike style of which Bacon is a typical example; and the colloquial style of men like Nash and Dekker and the pamphleteers. It must not, of course, be thought that the lines of demarcation can be exactly observed. The kinds overlapped and interchanged and ran into each other: Euphuists and pamphleteers were alike scholars in their respective ways; and no folly or fashion could wholly overlay the purity of our English speech in an age when the simplest private letter had a dignified cadence, and when the log of a slaver was a classic.

The term Euphuism is often loosely applied to any form of literary affectation—even to our modern habit of calling mean things by high-sounding names.¹ Properly speaking, it means a specific kind of affectation, first brought into currency by Lyly's novel of *Euphues, Prince of Athens*; it consists partly in chiming on a particular word (not exactly punning, for the different meanings are not sufficiently distinct), partly in a continuous use of analogies, often far-fetched and nearly always overwrought; but chiefly in a habit of exact balance and antithesis which sends the thought swinging like a pendulum across a scheme of measured and opposing clauses.

¹ George Eliot, in *Amos Barton*, speaks of 'the workhouse, euphuistically called the college'.

From the time of its first appearance it ran through English literature like a weed. The trick was so catching, the effect so superficially attractive, that not even the most august of our writers altogether escaped from it. It is true that Shakespeare usually employs it in a tone of good-natured banter;—Don Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Falstaff's image of the camomile, textually quoted from Lyly to point a burlesque speech in *Henry IV*: but sometimes he slips into it almost inadvertently as the natural idiom of the time. When Maria, in *Twelfth Night*, says of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'but that he hath the gift of a coward to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling, 'tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave,' she is talking pure Euphuism; nor did Lyly's hero ever display his meaning more antithetically than Orlando in *As You Like It*:—

'But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial: wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that was willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.'

Lyly never attained to the rhythm and cadence of this passage, but he undoubtedly tuned the instrument on which it is played.

Euphuës is commonly called the first English novel: the first, that is, which has a definite and organized plot.¹ At any rate, its immense popularity brought a special kind of prose literature into vogue: and set up an ideal of 'wit'—that faculty of seeing remote resemblances—which is not to be found in the simpler writings of More and Malory. To us,

¹ On this subject see M. Jusserand's volume, *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*.

no doubt, it appeals less than it did to its own age: like all devices it forgoes its purpose as soon as it exhibits its mechanism, and by the nineteenth century it had only survived in the gentle satire of Scott's 'Sir Piercie Shafton'. But in Elizabeth's reign it became almost a model of courtly writing: the passages from Sidney, here quoted, are closely affected by its influence, and we may remember that the *Arcadia* ranked only second to it in public-esteem. As a permanent contribution to our literature it is not of any great value: as a landmark in our history it is of great moment and importance.

Cowley, with unconscious irony, calls Bacon the Lord Chancellor of the laws of Nature: and it is true that the writings of the great lawyer are often characterized by the dignity and finality of the Bench. Part of the reason lay in that forensic training which taught him to judge carefully and pronounce clearly; to seize upon the essentials of an argument; to state his view without prolixity or confusion. Part also is to be found in his familiarity with the Latin language, which he wrote as readily as his own, and which gave to his style a special strength and terseness of expression. The narrative of the *New Atlantis* is simple, perspicuous, and direct; and if the development of the story falls short of its promise, we may remember that the book was left unfinished and that the episode which now ends it was never intended for its climax. It is, however, in his *Essays* that he takes highest rank as an English classic. His conception of the Essay is firmer and more concise than that of Montaigne, whom nevertheless he follows in the matter of arrangement. We have not the charming garrulous autobiography of the French writer—Bacon stands off from his subject and treats it in detachment—but we have somewhat the same series of aphorisms, anecdotes, and quotations: the whole work wrought

not by continuous fusion but by separate and distinct touches; and standing to an essay of Hazlitt or Matthew Arnold as a mosaic stands to an enamel.

Lastly, by way of contrast, there is here appended an example of more colloquial prose from a satirical work by Dekker. In calling it colloquial we must not be understood to mean that it confined itself entirely to the phrase and vocabulary of ordinary conversation: even in the reign of James I it cannot have been habitual to talk about the 'mews and hisses of the opposed rascality', but Dekker's aim seems to have been a heightened and pointed version of customary speech, an anticipation in short of some of the methods of modern journalism. The passage here given is interesting not only as an illustration of a fluent and rather undignified style, but as a curious picture of contemporary manners. The theatre which Dekker describes is of the time of Shakespeare's plays: it was to such chances of insolence and disregard that their fortunes were entrusted. Nor have we any reason to believe that the case is seriously exaggerated. Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* gives us a companion-picture from the court of Louis XIV: the opera-houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were equally unmannerly and equally turbulent. The plans of the first great theatre in Vienna were rejected because the boxes did not contain room for the card-tables; at Rome it was long a matter of hazard whether the audience should drown the performance with applause or bring it to a summary end by pelting the composer. For everything which Dekker implies we may find warrant in other records: and his whole account adds one more piece of evidence to the remarkable truth that art has often flourished with most success when the claims of its followers have been least regarded.

JOHN LYLY (1554?-1606), a native of the Weald of Kent, was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and also at Cambridge. In 1579 he published *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, a prose romance which was so immediately successful that he supplemented it next year with a second part, called *Euphues and his England*. Shortly after this he was appointed Vice-master of the companies of child-actors at St. Paul's and the Savoy, for whom he wrote eight plays. In 1589 he entered Parliament, where he sat until his death; in 1590 he lost his office through a Royal order inhibiting the children's companies, and for the last sixteen years of his life he made continuous but unsuccessful applications for court preferment. Of his plays, the most important are *Alexander and Campaspe* (probably written in 1581, published 1584), *Sapho and Phao* (published 1584), *Endimion* (published 1591), and *Midas* (published 1592). A somewhat scurrilous tract in the Martin Mar-Prelate controversy was long attributed to him, though on insufficient evidence.

EUPHUES

Euphues, having been introduced to Lucilla by Philautus, presses his suit in the following terms:—

GENTLEWOMAN, my acquaintance being so little, I am afraid my credit will be less, for that they are commonly soonest believed that are best beloved, and they liked best whom we have known longest; nevertheless, the noble mind suspecteth no guile without cause, neither condemneth any wight without proof; having therefore notice of your heroical heart, I am the better persuaded of my good hap. So it is, Lucilla, that coming to Naples but to fetch fire, as the byeword is, not to make my place of abode, I have found such flames that I can neither quench them with the water of free-will, neither cool them with wisdom. For as the Hop, the pole being never so high, groweth to the end, or as the dry Beech kindled at the root, never leaveth until it come to the top; or as one drop of poison disperseth itself into every

vein, so affection having caught hold of my heart, and the sparks of love kindled my liver, will suddenly, though secretly, flame up into my head, and spread itself into every sinew. It is your beauty (pardon my abrupt boldness), Lady, that hath taken every part of me prisoner, and brought me into this deep distress, but seeing women when one praiseth them for their deserts, deem that he flattereth them to obtain his desire, I am here present to yield myself to such trial as your courtesy in this behalf shall require. Yet will you commonly object this to such as serve you, and starve to win your goodwill, that hot love is soon cold: that the bavin, though it burn bright, is but a blaze: that scalding water, if it stand awhile, turneth almost to ice: that pepper, though it be hot in the mouth, is cold in the maw: that the faith of men, though it fry in their words, it freezeth in their works: which things (Lucilla) albeit they be sufficient to reprove the lightness of some one, yet can they not convince every one of lewdness: neither ought the constancy of all to be brought in question through the subtlety of a few. For although the worm entereth into almost every wood, yet he eateth not the cedar-tree. Though the stone Cylindrus at every thunder-clap roll from the hill, yet the pure, sleek stone mounteth at the noise: though the rust fret the hardest steel, yet doth it not eat into the emerald: though the Polypus change his hue, yet the Salamander keepeth his colour: though Proteus transform himself into every shape, yet Pygmalion retaineth his old form: though Aeneas were too fickle to Dido, yet Troilus was too faithful to Cressid: though others seem counterfeit in their deeds, yet, Lucilla, persuade yourself that Euphues will be always current in his dealings. But as the true gold is tried by the touch, the pure flint by the stroke of the iron, so the

loyal heart of the faithful lover is known by the trial of his lady: of the which trial (Lucilla) if you shall account Euphues worthy, assure yourself he will be as ready to offer himself a sacrifice for your sweet sake, as yourself shall be willing to employ him in your service. Neither doth he desire to be trusted in any way, until he shall be tried every way: neither doth he crave credit at the first, but a good countenance, till his desire shall be made manifest by his deserts. Thus, not blinded by light affection, but dazzled with your rare perfection, and boldened by your exceeding courtesy, I have unfolded mine entire love, desiring you having so good leisure to ~~give~~ so friendly an answer, as I may receive comfort, and you commendation.

SAPHO AND PHAO

PROLOGUE AT THE BLACK FRIARS

WHERE the bee can suck no honey, she leaveth her sting behind; and where the bear cannot find Origanum to heal his grief, he blasteth all other leaves with his breath. We fear it is like to fare so with us, that seeing you cannot draw from our labours sweet content, you leave behind you a sour mislike: and with open reproach blame our good meanings, because you cannot reap your wonted mirths. Our intent was at this time to move inward delight, not outward lightness; and to breed (if it might be) soft smiling, not loud laughing: knowing it to the wise to be as great pleasure to hear counsel mixed with wit, as to the foolish to have sport mingled with rudeness. . . . We have endeavoured to be as far from unseemly speeches to make your ears glow, as we hope you will be free from unkind reports to make our cheeks blush. . . . The griffin never spreadeth her wings in the sun, when she hath any sick feathers: yet have we

ventured to present our exercises before your judgements when we know them full of weak matter ; yielding rather ourselves to the courtesy which we have ever found, than to the preciseness which we ought to fear.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586).

(From the Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*)

DESCRIPTION OF ARCADIA

THERE were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees ; humble valleys whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers ; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers ; thickets which, being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to, by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds ; each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort : here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old ; there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing : and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music. As for the houses of the country . . . they were all scattered, no two being one by the other, and yet not so far off as that it barred mutual succour ; a show, as it were, of an accompanable solitariness and of a civil wildness.

ZELMANE AND DORUS FIGHT THE LION AND THE BEAR

Basilus and Gynecia, the King and Queen of Arcadia, have two daughters, Pamela and Philoclea. With these, two Princes, Musidorus and Pyrocles, are in love. Pyrocles disguises himself as an Amazon, and, under the name of Zelmane, is received into the household of Basilus. Musidorus dresses as a shepherd, and, under the name of Dorus,

becomes the assistant of the peasant Dametas, in whose house Pamela lives.

And thus they went to the lodge, where they found Gynecia and her daughters ready to go to the field, to delight themselves there a while until the shepherd's coming; whither also taking Zelmane with them, as they went Dametas told them of Dorus, and desired he might be accepted there that day in stead of his brother Meneclas. As for Basilius, he stayed behind to bring the shepherds, with whom he meant to confer, to breed the better Zelmane's liking, which he only regarded, while the other beautiful band came to the fair field appointed for the shepherdish pastimes.

It was indeed a place of delight, for through the midst of it there ran a sweet brook, which did both hold the eye open with her azure streams, and yet seek to close the eye with the purling noise it made upon the pebble stones it ran over, the field itself being set in some places with roses, and in all the rest constantly preserving a flourishing green; the roses added such a ruddy show unto it as though the field were bashful at his own beauty. About it, as if it had been to enclose a theatre, grew such sort of trees as either excellency of fruit, stateliness of growth, continual greenness, or poetical fancies have made at any time famous; in most part of which there had been framed by art such pleasant arbours that, one answering another, they became a gallery aloft from tree to tree almost round about, which below gave a perfect shadow—a pleasant refuge then from the cholerick look of Phoebus.

In this place, while Gynecia walked hard by them, carrying many unquiet contentions about her, the ladies sat them down, inquiring divers questions of the shepherd Dorus, who, keeping his eye still upon Pamela, answered -

with such a trembling voice and abashed countenance, and oftentimes so far from the matter, that it was some sport to the young ladies, thinking it want of education which made him so discountenanced with unwonted presence. But Zelmane, that saw in him the glass of her own misery, taking the hand of Philoclea, and with burning kisses setting it close to her lips, as if it should stand there like a hand in the margin of a book, to note some saying worthy to be marked, began to speak these words: 'O Love, since thou art so changeable in men's estates, how art thou so constant in their torments?' when suddenly there came out of a wood a monstrous lion, and a she-bear not far from him, of little less ferce-ness, which, as they guessed, having been hunted in forests far off, were by chance come thither, where before such beasts had never been seen. Then care, not fear, or fear not for themselves, altered something the countenances of the two lovers; but so, as any man might perceive, was rather an assembling of powers than dismayedness of courage. Philoclea no sooner espied the lion, but that, obeying the commandment of fear, she leapt up and ran to the lodge-ward as fast as her delicate legs could carry her, while Dorus drew Pamela behind a tree, where she stood quaking like the partridge on which the hawk is even ready to seize. But the lion, seeing Philoclea run away, bent his race to her-ward, and was ready to seize himself on the prey, when Zelmane, to whom danger then was a cause of dreadlessness, all the composition of her elements being nothing but fiery, with swiftness of desire crossed him, and with force of affection strake him such a blow upon his chine that she opened all his body, wherewith the valiant beast turning her with open jaws, she gave him such a thrust through his breast that all the lion could do was with his paw to tear off the mantle

and sleeve of Zelmane with a little scratch, rather than a wound, his death-blow having taken away the effect of his force; but therewithal he fell down, and gave Zelmane leisure to take off his head, to carry it for a present to her lady Philoclea, who all this time, not knowing what was done behind her, kept on her course like 'Arethusa when she ran from Alpheus.' Zelmane, carrying the lion's head in her hand, did not fully overtake her till they came to the presence of Basilius. Neither were they long there but that Gynecia came thither also, who had been in such a trance of musing that Zelmane was fighting with the lion before she knew of any lion's coming; but then affection resisting, and the soon ending of the fight preventing all extremity of fear, she marked Zelmane's fighting, and when the lion's head was off, as Zelmane ran after Philoclea, so she could not find in heart but run after Zelmane.

Being all come before Basilius, amazed with this sight, and fear having such possession of the fair Philoclea that her blood durst not yet come to her face to take away the name of paleness from her most pure whiteness, Zelmane kneeled down and presented the lion's head unto her. 'Only lady,' said she, 'here you see the punishment of that unnatural beast which, contrary to his own kind, would have wronged prince's blood, guided with such traitorous eyes as durst rebel against your beauty.' 'Happy am I and my beauty both,' answered the sweet Philoclea, then blushing—for Fear had bequeathed room to his kinsman Bashfulness—'that you, excellent Amazon, were there to teach him good manners.' 'And even thanks to that beauty,' answered Zelmane, 'which can give an edge to the bluntest swords.' Then Philoclea told her father how it had happened, but as she turned her eyes, in her tale, to Zelmane, she per-

ceived some blood upon Zelmane's shoulder, so that, starting with the lovely grace of pity, she showed it to her father and mother. . . . But then they ran both unto her, like a father and mother to an only child, and, though Zelmane assured them it was nothing, would needs see it, Gynecia having skill in chirurgery, an art in those days much esteemed, because it served to virtuous courage, which even ladies would, ever with the contempt of cowards, seem to cherish. But, looking upon it, which gave more inward bleeding wounds to Zelmane, for she might sometimes feel Philoclea's touch while she helped her mother, she found it indeed of no importance ; yet applied she a precious balm unto it, of power to heal a greater grief.

But even then, and not before, they remembered Pamela, and therefore Zelmane, thinking of her friend Dorus, was running back to be satisfied, when they might all see Pamela coming between Dorus and Dametas, having in her hand the paw of a bear, which the shepherd Dorus had newly presented unto her, desiring her to accept it, as of such a beast, which though she deserved death for her presumption, yet was her wit to be esteemed, since she could make so fair a choice. Dametas for his part came piping and dancing, the merriest man in a parish ; and when he came so near as he might be heard of Basilius, he would needs break through his ears with a joyful song of their good success.

Being now all come together, and all desirous to know each other's adventures, Pamela's noble heart would needs gratefully make known the valiant mean of her safety, which, directing her speech to her mother, she did in this manner : 'As soon,' said she, 'as ye were all run away, and that I hoped to be in safety, there came out of the same woods a horrible foul bear, which, fear-

ing belike to deal while the lion was present, as soon as he was gone came furiously towards the place where I was, and this young shepherd left alone by me. I truly not guilty of any wisdom, which since they lay to my charge, because they say it is the best refuge against that beast, but even pure fear bringing forth that effect of wisdom, fell down flat on my face, needing not counterfeit being dead, for indeed I was little better. But this young shepherd, with wonderful courage, having no other weapon but that knife you see, standing before the place where I lay, so behaved himself that the first sight I had when I thought myself already near Charon's ferry was the shepherd showing me his bloody knife in token of victory.' 'I pray you,' said Zelmane, speaking to Dorus, whose valour she was careful to have manifested, 'in what sort, so ill weaponed, could you achieve this enterprise?'

'Noble lady,' said Dorus, 'the manner of these beasts' fighting with any man is to stand up upon their hinder feet: and so this did; and being ready to give me a shrewd embracement, I think the god Pan (ever careful of the chief blessing of Arcadia) guided my hand so just to the heart of the beast that neither could she once touch me, nor (which is the only matter in this worthy remembrance) breed any danger to the princess. For my part I am rather with all subjected humbleness to thank her excellencies, since the duty thereunto gave me heart to save myself, than to receive thanks for a deed which was her only inspiring.' And this Dorus spoke, keeping affection as much as he could back from coming into his eyes and gestures. But Zelmane, that had the same character in her heart, could easily decipher it, and therefore, to keep him longer in speech, desired to understand the conclusion of the matter, and how the honest Dametas

was escaped. 'Nay,' said Pamela, 'none shall take that office from myself, being so much bound to him as I am for my education.' And with that word, scorn borrowing the countenance of mirth, somewhat she smiled, and thus spake on :—'When,' said she, 'Dorus made me assuredly perceive that all cause of fear was passed, the truth is I was ashamed to find myself alone with this shepherd ; and therefore, looking about me if I could see anybody, at length we both perceived the gentle Dametas lying with his head and breast as far as he could thrust himself into a bush, drawing up his legs as close unto him as he could ; for like a man of a very kind nature, soon to take pity of himself, he was full resolved not to see his own death. And when this shepherd pushed him, bidding him to be of good cheer, it was a great while ere we could persuade him that Dorus was not the bear, so that he was fain to pull him out by the heels and show him the beast as dead as he could wish it, which, you may believe me, was a very joyful sight unto him. But then he forgot all courtesy, for he fell upon the beast, giving it many a manful wound, swearing by much it was not well such beasts should be suffered in the commonwealth ; and then my governor, as full of joy as before of fear, came dancing and singing before, as even now you saw him.'

COMPARISON OF THE POET WITH THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE HISTORIAN

(From the *Apology for Poetry*)

THIS purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning, under what name soever it come forth, or to what immediate end soever it be directed, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection

as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, are capable of. This, according to the inclination of the man, bred many formed impressions: for some, that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be as high and heavenly as acquaintance with the stars, gave themselves to Astronomy; others, persuading themselves to be demigods if they knew the causes of things, became natural and supernatural Philosophers; some an admirable delight drew to Music, and some the certainty of demonstration to the Mathematics:—but all, one and other, having this scope to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his own divine essence. But when by the balance of experience it was found that the Astronomer, looking to the stars, might fall into a ditch; that the inquiring Philosopher might be blind in himself; and that the Mathematician might draw forth a straight line with a crooked heart; then lo! did proof, the over-ruler of opinions, make manifest that all these are but serving Sciences, which, as they have each a private end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistress Knowledge. . . . So that, the ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action, those skills that most serve to bring forth that have a most just title to be Princes over all the rest. . . . As principal challengers step forth the moral Philosophers, whom methinketh I see coming towards me with sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight,—rudely clothed for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things,—with books in their hands against glory whereto they set their names,—sophistically speaking against subtlety,—and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger. These men, casting largesse as they go of Definitions, Divisions,

and Distinctions, do soberly ask whether it be possible to find any path so ready to lead a man to virtue as that which teacheth what virtue is, and teacheth it not only by delivering forth his very being, his causes and effects, but also by making known his enemy Vice which must be destroyed, and his cumbersome servant Passion which must be mastered. . . .

The Historian scarcely giveth leisure to the Moralist to say so much, but that he, laden with old mouse-eaten records, authorizing himself (for the most part) upon other histories whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of Hear-say,—having much ado to accord differing writers and to pick truth out of partiality,—better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goeth than how his own wit runneth,—curious for antiquities and inquisitive of novelties,—a wonder to young folks and a tyrant in table-talk,—denieth in a great chafe that any man for teaching of virtue and virtuous actions is comparable to him. . . . The Philosopher (saith he) teacheth a disputative virtue but I do an active: his virtue is excellent in the dangerless Academy of Plato, but mine showeth forth her honourable face in the battles of Marathon, Pharsalia, Poitiers, and Agincourt. He teacheth virtue by certain abstract considerations, but I only bid you follow the footing of men that have gone before you. . . . Then would he allege you innumerable examples, conferring story by story, how much the wisest Senators and Princes have been directed by the credit of history, as Brutus, Alphonsus of Aragon, and who not if need be? At length the long line of their disputation maketh a point in this, that the one giveth the precept, and the other the example. . . .

But both, not having both, do both halt. For the

Philosopher, setting down with thorny argument the bare rule, is so hard of utterance and so misty to be conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him shall wade in him till he be old before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest: for his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general that happy is the man who may understand him and more happy that can apply what he doth understand. On the other side, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of things and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine.

Now doth the peerless Poet perform both: for whatsoever the Philosopher saith should be done he giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom he presupposeth it was done. . . . A perfect picture, I say, for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the Philosophers bestoweth but a wordish description which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth.

For as in outward things, to a man that had never seen an Elephant or a Rhinoceros, [he] who should tell him most exquisitely all their shapes, colour, bigness, and particular marks,—or of a gorgeous Palace the architecture with declaring the full beauties,—might well make the hearer able to repeat, as it were by rote, all he had heard, yet should never satisfy his inward conceits with being witness to itself of a true lively knowledge: but the same man, as soon as he might see those beasts well painted, or the house well in model, should straightway grow, without need of any description, to a judicial comprehending of them; so no doubt the Philosopher with his learned definition, be it of virtues, vices, matters

of public policy or private government, replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom ; which notwithstanding lie dark before the imaginative or judging power if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of Poesy.

FRANCIS BACON, Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans (1561-1626), son of Lord Keeper Bacon, was born in London at York House, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1575 he entered Gray's Inn ; nine years later he sat in Parliament for Melcombe Regis, and wrote his first work, *A Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth*. He began his Parliamentary career in opposition to the Queen, who showed her displeasure by refusing him promotion. In 1591 he made acquaintance with the Earl of Essex, who treated him with great friendship and gave him an estate in Twickenham Park. There he wrote successively the *Essays* (1596) and the *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), continuing throughout his regular attendance at the House of Commons. In 1600 and 1601 occurred the two trials of Essex, the first for maladministration in Ireland, the second for high treason. Bacon on both occasions prosecuted his benefactor, who at the second trial was convicted and executed. The *Apology*, in which Bacon defends his conduct, was published in 1604. In 1605 appeared the *Advancement of Learning*, and then for a few years Bacon devoted himself almost entirely to politics. His speech on the Union with Scotland (February 17, 1607) won him the Solicitor-Generalship, and at the same time he took a conspicuous part in the work of Church Reform. About 1610 he began the *Instauratio Magna*, intended as a complete system of Natural Philosophy, but left unfinished at his death. In 1613 he was made Attorney-General, in 1617 Lord Keeper, in 1618 Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam, in January 1621 Viscount St. Albans. During this period two important works were written, the *New Atlantis* between 1614 and 1617, and the *Novum Organum* (second part of the *Instauratio Magna*), finished in 1620. By the beginning of 1621 he had reached the zenith of his fortunes ; then came a sudden and sheer decline. In March he was accused of taking bribes, on May 1 he was

deprived of the Great Seal, on May 3 he was sentenced to a fine of £40,000, with imprisonment during the King's pleasure; he was disabled from sitting in Parliament, and banished from the court. The greater part of this sentence was relaxed by James I, and in October Bacon took courage to offer the king a *History of Henry VII*, which was accepted and published in 1622. During the last four years of his life he was occupied partly with the *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (a translation and completion of the *Advancement of Learning*), partly with four tracts—the *Historia Ventorum*, the *Historia Vitae et Mortis*, the *Historia Densi et Rari*, and the *Sylva Sylvarum*—which were intended for the third section of the *Instauratio Magna*. He died in 1626 from the effects of an experiment.

ESSAY ON REVENGE

REVENGE is a kind of wild justice, which the more a man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly in taking revenge a man is but even with his enemy: but in passing it over he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, 'It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence.' That which is past is gone and irrevocable, and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come. Therefore they do but trifle with themselves that labour in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick or scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let

a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish ; else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh ; this is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent. But base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. 'You shall read,' saith he, 'that we are commanded to forgive our enemies ; but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.' But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune. 'Shall we,' saith he, 'take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also ?' And so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate ; as that for the death of Caesar, for the death of Pertinax, for the death of Henry III of France, and many more, but in private revenges it is not so, nay, rather vindictive persons live the life of witches, who, as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

NEW ATLANTIS

WE sailed from Peru, where we had continued by the space of one whole year, for China and Japan, by the South Sea, taking with us victuals for twelve months ; and had good winds from the east, though soft and weak, for five months' space and more. But then the wind came about, and settled in the west for many days, so as we could make little or no way, and were sometimes in purpose to turn back. But then again there arose strong and great winds from the south, with a point east ; which

carried us up, for all that we could do, towards the north: by which time our victuals failed us, though we had made good spare of them. So that finding ourselves, in the midst of the greatest wilderness of waters in the world, without victual, we gave ourselves for lost men, and prepared for death. Yet we did lift up our hearts and voices to God above, who showeth His wonders in the deep; beseeching Him of His mercy, that as in the beginning He discovered the face of the deep, and brought forth dry land, so He would now discover land to us, that we might not perish. And it came to pass, that the next day about evening we saw within a kenning¹ before us, towards the north, as it were thick clouds, which did put us in some hope of land: knowing how that part of the South Sea was utterly unknown: and might have islands or continents, that hitherto were not come to light. Wherefore we bent our course thither, where we saw the appearance of land, all that night: and in the dawning of next day, we might plainly discern that it was a land flat to our sight, and full of boscage, which made it show the more dark. And after an hour and a half's sailing, we entered into a good haven, being the port of a fair city. Not great indeed, but well built, and that gave a pleasant view from the sea. And we thinking every minute long till we were on land, came close to the shore and offered to land. But straightways we saw divers of the people, with bastons² in their hands, as it were forbidding us to land: yet without any cries or fierceness, but only as warning us off, by signs that they made. Whereupon being not a little discomfited, we were advising with ourselves what we should do. During which time there made forth to us a small boat, with about eight persons in it, whereof one of them had in his

¹ 'View' (cf. 'within our ken').

² 'Staves' (see n. 2, p. 331).

hand a tipstaff of a yellow cane, tipped at both ends with blue, who made aboard our ship, without any show of distrust at all. And when he saw one of our number present himself somewhat afore the rest, he drew forth a little scroll of parchment (somewhat yellower than our parchment, and shining like the leaves of writing tables, but otherwise soft and flexible), and delivered it to our foremost man. In which scroll were written in ancient Hebrew, and in ancient Greek, and in good Latin of the school, and in Spanish, these words : ' Land ye not, none of you, and provide to be gone from this coast within sixteen days, except you have further time given you ; meanwhile, if you want fresh water, or victual, or help for your sick, or that your ship needeth repair, write down your wants, and you shall have that which belongeth to mercy.' This scroll was signed with a stamp of cherubim's wings, not spread, but hanging downwards ; and by them a cross. This being delivered, the officer returned, and left only a servant with us to receive our answer. Consulting hereupon amongst ourselves, we were much perplexed. The denial of landing, and hasty warning us away, troubled us much : on the other side, to find that the people had languages, and were so full of humanity, did comfort us not a little. And above all, the sign of the cross to that instrument, was to us a great rejoicing, and as it were a certain presage of good. Our answer was in the Spanish tongue, ' That for our ship, it was well ; for we had rather met with calms and contrary winds, than any tempests. For our sick, they were many, and in very ill case ; so that if they were not permitted to land, they ran in danger of their lives.' Our other wants we set down in particular, adding, ' That we had some little store of merchandise, which if it pleased them to deal for, it might supply our wants,

without being chargeable unto them.' We offered some reward in pistolets unto the servant, and a piece of crimson velvet to be presented to the officer; but the servant took them not, nor would scarce look upon them; and so left us, and went back in another little boat which was sent for him.

About three hours after we had dispatched our answer there came towards us a person (as it seemed) of a place¹. He had on him a gown with wide sleeves, of a kind of water chamolet², of an excellent azure colour, far more glossy than ours: his under apparel was green, and so was his hat, being in the form of a turban, daintily made, and not so huge as the Turkish turbans; and the locks of his hair came down below the brims of it. A reverend man was he to behold. He came in a boat, gilt in some part of it, with four persons more only in that boat; and was followed by another boat, wherein were some twenty. When he was come within a flight-shot of our ship, signs were made to us that we should send forth some to meet him upon the water, which we presently did in our ship-boat, sending the principal man amongst us save one, and four of our number with him. When we were come within six yards of their boat, they called to us to stay, and not to approach farther, which we did. And thereupon the man, whom I before described, stood up, and with a loud voice in Spanish, asked, 'Are ye Christians?' We answered, 'We were;' fearing the less, because of the cross we had seen in the subscription. At which answer the said person lift up his right hand towards heaven, and drew it softly to his mouth (which is the gesture they use, when they thank God), and then said: 'If ye will swear, all of you, by the merits of the Saviour, that ye are no pirates; nor have shed blood, lawfully nor

¹ i.e. office or rank.

² A stuff woven of wool and silk.

unlawfully, within forty days past ; you may have licence to come on land.' We said, 'We were all ready to take that oath.' Whereupon one of those that were with him, being (as it seemed) a notary, made an entry of this act. Which done, another of the attendants of the great person, which was with him in the same boat, after his lord had spoken a little to him, said aloud : 'My lord would have you know, that it is not of pride, or greatness, that he cometh not aboard your ship : but for that, in your answer, you declare that you have many sick amongst you, he was warned by the conservator of health of the city that he should keep a distance.' We bowed ourselves towards him, and answered : 'We were his humble servants ; and accounted for great honour and singular humanity towards us, that which was already done : but hoped well, that the nature of the sickness of our men was not infectious.' So he returned ; and a while after came the notary to us aboard our ship ; holding in his hand a fruit of that country, like an orange, but of colour between orange-tawny and scarlet : which cast a most excellent odour. He used it (as it seemed) for a preservative against infection. He gave us our oath, 'By the name of Jesus, and His merits : ' and after told us, that the next day by six of the clock in the morning, we should be sent to, and brought to the strangers' house (so he called it), where we should be accommodated of things, both for our whole and for our sick. So he left us ; and when we offered him some pistolets, he smiling, said, 'He must not be twice paid for one labour : ' meaning (as I take it) that he had salary sufficient of the state for his service. For (as I after learned) they call an officer that taketh rewards, twice-paid.

The next morning early, there came to us the same officer that came to us at first with his cane, and told us :

'He came to conduct us to the strangers' house: and that he had prevented¹ the hour, because we might have the whole day before us for our business. For (said he) if you will follow my advice, there shall first go with me some few of you, and see the place, and how it may be made convenient for you: and then you may send for your sick, and the rest of your number, which ye will bring on land.' We thanked him, and said, 'That his care which he took of desolate strangers, God would reward.' And so six of us went on land with him; and when we were on land, he went before us, and turned to us, and said, 'He was but our servant, and our guide.' He led us through three fair streets; and all the way we went there were gathered some people on both sides, standing in a row; but in so civil a fashion, as if it had been, not to wonder at us, but to welcome us; and divers of them, as we passed by them, put their arms a little abroad, which is their gesture when they bid any welcome. The strangers' house is a fair and spacious house, built of brick, of somewhat a bluer colour than our brick; and with handsome windows, some of glass, some of a kind of cambric oiled. He brought us first into a fair parlour above stairs, and then asked us, 'What number of persons we were? and how many sick?' We answered, 'We were in all (sick and whole) one and fifty persons, whereof our sick were seventeen.' He desired us to have patience a little, and to stay till he came back to us, which was about an hour after; and then he led us to see the chambers which were provided for us, being in number nineteen. They having cast it (as it seemeth) that four of those chambers, which were better than the rest, might receive four of the principal men of our company; and lodge them alone by themselves; and the other fifteen chambers were to

¹ 'Anticipated'.

lodge us, two and two together. The chambers were handsome and cheerful chambers, and furnished civilly. Then he led us to a long gallery, like a dorture¹, where he showed us all along the one side (for the other side was but wall and window) seventeen cells, very neat ones, having partitions of cedar wood. Which gallery and cells, being in all forty (many more than we needed), were instituted as an infirmary for sick persons. And he told us withal, that as any of our sick waxed well, he might be removed from his cell to a chamber: for which purpose there were set forth ten spare chambers, besides the number we spake of before. This done, he brought us back to the parlour, and lifting up his cane a little (as they do when they give any charge or command), said to us, 'Ye are to know that the custom of the land requireth, that after this day and to-morrow (which we give you for removing your people from your ship), you are to keep within doors for three days. But let it not trouble you, nor do not think yourselves restrained, but rather left to your rest and ease. You shall want nothing, and there are six of our people appointed to attend you for any business you may have abroad.' We gave him thanks with all affection and respect, and said, 'God surely is manifested in this land.' We offered him also twenty pistolets; but he smiled, and only said: 'What? Twice paid!' And so he left us.

THOMAS DEKKER (? 1570-? 1641) was born in London. His whole life seems to have been a struggle against poverty, debt and opposition, maintained throughout with unflinching courage and good humour. Much of his writing was hack-work for the publishers or the theatre, hastily composed amid the surroundings of Grub Street and in imminent fear of the bailiff's hand. Yet, beside being one of the most prolific and

¹ 'Dormitory'

popular dramatists of his day, he wrote a large number of humorous and satirical works which give amusing pictures of the social and literary life of his time. Between 1598 and 1602 he wrote eight plays single-handed, beside many in collaboration with Drayton, Wilson, Chettle, and Jonson; in 1602 appeared *Satiromastix*, a vigorous answer to Jonson's *Poetaster*; in 1603 followed a vivid and brilliant tract called *The Bachelor's Banquet* (founded on a French satire of the fifteenth century), in 1606 *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London*, in 1608 *The Belman of London*, and in 1609 the *Gull's Horne-booke*, of which a typical extract is here given. From 1613 to 1616 he seems to have been in the King's Bench prison; in 1620 appeared a tract in verse called *Dekker's Dream*, and from henceforward to the end of his life he was principally occupied in the composition of plays and masques. Some of his dramatic works were written with Middleton or Massinger. His work suffered to some extent by the headlong rapidity with which it was composed; but he had a great deal of tenderness and humour, and many of his works contain invaluable pictures of Jacobean manners.

THE GALLANT AT THE THEATRE

(From the *Gull's Hornbook*, 1609)

WHETHER therefore the gatherers of the public or private playhouse stand to receive the afternoon's rent, let our gallant, having paid it, presently advance himself up to the throne of the stage: I mean not into the lord's room¹, which is now but the stage's suburbs; . . . but on the very rushes where comedy is to dance, yea, and under the very state of Cambyses himself must our feathered ostrich, like a piece of ordinance, be planted valiantly because impudently, beating down the mews and hisses of the opposed rascality.

¹ i.e. the stage-box, or first seat in the theatre. The price of admission to this was one shilling: to other parts of the house, from sixpence to a penny.

For do but cast up a reckoning: what large comings-in are pursed up by sitting on the stage? First a conspicuous eminence is gotten, by which means the best and most essential parts of a gallant—good clothes, a proportionable leg, white hand, the Parisian lock¹, and a tolerable beard, are perfectly revealed.

By sitting on the stage you have a signed patent to engross the whole commodity of censure, may lawfully presume to be a girder and stand at the helm to steer the passage of scenes; yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent over-weening coxcomb.

By sitting on the stage you may, without travelling for it, at the very next door ask whose play it is; and by that quest of inquiry the law warrants you to avoid much mistaking: if you know not the author you may rail against him and peradventure so behave yourself that you may enforce the author to know you.

By sitting on the stage you may have a good stool for sixpence, at any time know what particular part any of the infants present², get your match lighted, examine the play-suit's lace and perhaps win wagers upon laying 'tis copper. But . . . present not yourself on the stage, especially at a new play, until the quaking Prologue hath by rubbing got colour into his cheeks and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that he is upon point to enter: for then it is time, as though you were one of the properties, or that you dropped out of the hangings, to creep from behind the arras with your tripos or three-footed stool in one hand and a tester in the other; for if you should bestow your person upon the vulgar when the house is but half full your apparel is quite eaten up—the fashion lost, and the proportion of your body in more

¹ The so-called 'love-lock'.

² See note on Life of John Lyly.

danger to be devoured than if it were served up in the counter amongst the poultry¹;—avoid that as you would the bastorne². It shall crown you with rich commendation to laugh aloud in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy; and to let that clapper, your tongue, be tossed so high that all the house may ring of it: your lords use it; your knights are apes to the lords and do so too; your inn-a-court man is saucy to the knights and (many very scurvily) comes likewise limping after it: be thou a beagle to them all . . . for by talking and laughing, like a ploughman at a morris, you heap Pelion upon Ossa, glory upon glory: as *first*, all the eyes in the galleries leave walking after the players and only follow you; the simplest dolt in the house snatches up your name, and, when he meets you in the street, or that you fall into his hands in the middle of a watch³, his word shall be taken for you: he will cry 'he's such a gallant', and you pass: *secondly*, you publish your temperance to the world in that you seem not to resort thither to taste vain pleasures with a hungry appetite, but only as a gentleman to spend a foolish hour or two because you can do nothing else: *thirdly*, you mightily disrelish the audience and disgrace the author. Marry, you take up, though it be at the worst hand, a strong opinion of your own judgement, and enforce the poet to take pity of your weakness, and, by some dedicated sonnet, to bring you into a better paradise, only to stop your mouth.

Before the play begins, fall to cards: you may win or lose as fencers do in a prize and beat one another by confederacy, yet share the money when you meet at

¹ The old Counter prison stood in the street called the Poultry.

² 'A thrashing'.

³ i.e. 'police'.

supper: notwithstanding, to gull the ragamuffins that stand aloof gaping at you, throw the cards, having first turned four or five of them, round about the stage, just upon the third sound¹, as though you had lost: it skills not if the four knaves lie on their backs and outface the audience; there's none such fools as dare take exceptions at them, because, ere they go off, better knaves than they will fall into the company.

Now, sir, if the writer be a fellow that hath either epigrammed you or hath had a flirt at your mistress, or hath brought either your feather or your red beard or your little legs on the stage, you shall disgrace him worse than by tossing him in a blanket, or giving him the bastinado in a tavern, if in the middle of his play, be it pastoral or comedy, moral or tragedy, you rise with a screwed and discontented face from your stool to be gone: no matter whether the scenes be good or no; the better they are the worse you distaste them; and, being on your feet sneak not away like a coward, but salute all your gentle acquaintance, that are spread either on the rushes or stools about you, and draw what troop you can from the stage after you: the mimics² are beholden to you for allowing them elbow-room. . . .

Marry, if either the company or indisposition of the weather bind you to sit it out, my counsel is then that you turn plain ape: take up a rush and tickle the earnest ears of your fellow gallants, to make other fools fall a-laughing; mew at passionate speeches, blare at mercy, find fault with the music, whew at the children's action, whistle at the songs, and above all curse the sharers³ that whereas the same day you had bestowed forty shillings on an

¹ The signal for the curtain to rise.

² i. e. the actors.

³ i. e. the proprietors of the theatre.

embroidered felt and feather, . . . within two hours after you encounter the very same block on the stage, when the haberdasher swore to you the impression was extant but that morning.

To conclude: hoard up the finest play-scrap you can get¹, upon which your lean wit may most savourily feed for want of other stuff, when the Arcadian and Euphuesed gentlewomen have their tongues sharpened to set upon you: that quality, next to your shuttlecock, is the only furniture to a courtier that is but a new beginner and is but in his A.B.C. of compliment.

¹ The practice of interlarding conversation with phrases and catch-words from the theatre is frequently satirized by Elizabethan writers. See, for instance, Marston's *Scourge of Villanie*, Bk. iii. Sat. ii.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FOLLOWERS

JUDGED by the absolute standard of literary achievement, the subject of the present chapter must needs be considered an anticlimax. Elizabethan prose and poetry both attained their summit in the work which we have already reviewed: and the authors who remain to be described lie across the ridge on the further slope towards the valley. Historically, however, their poetry is of interest, as showing the influence of Elizabethan methods and traditions: and it has its own intrinsic force or sweetness, which it were as idle to depreciate as to overpraise. Fletcher and Browne were both, in different ways, disciples of Spenser: the one a close imitator, the other more detached in style but looking at nature from somewhat the same standpoint. In the passage from *Christ's Victory and Triumph* here quoted, and also in the longer and more audacious description of the first Easter morning, we may catch something of the cadence and melody of the *Faery Queene*: less beautiful (partly from an unfortunate alteration in the stanza), but bearing unmistakably the imprint of its school. We may doubt, again, whether *Britannia's Pastorals* would have been written if it had not been for Spenser's eclogues: the form and phrase are different, but there is a real similarity in the character of the feeling expressed. Drummond, a skilful writer and a true poet, reads like a silver-age reproduction of the grand style: of its madrigalian conceits, its classical allusions, its rich and tuneful versification. His hymns have the rare merit of being neither

bare nor florid, and for this alone he deserves his place in our history.

Two more poets remain to be discussed. Chapman, immortalized by the commendation of Keats, was in his own day principally celebrated as a dramatist, and his main contribution to what is sometimes called 'pure literature' is to be found in his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. They are rough, strong, and vigorous, far more like Homer than the silken verses of Pope; they are beaten out like iron under a sledge-hammer, and thrown down into a clattering ringing heap as they are finished. With no grace and with little beauty, they contrive nevertheless to give some impression of the epic manliness of their original, and they especially excel in descriptions of movement and action. Last comes Drayton, an odd mixture of playful fancy, genuine feeling, and dry laborious industry. His *Polyolbion* is as tedious as a gazetteer: even its delightful illustrations have not saved it from oblivion. His account of the Barons' Wars is little more than a rhymed chronicle, and has no more artistic value. Yet, as we have already seen, he wrote one of the great sonnets of the age; his *Nymphidia* is a charming introduction to fairyland, and his brilliant and stirring *Ballad of Agincourt* is perhaps the finest example of its kind in the language. The truth would seem to be that he wrote too much and that he essayed too many styles. With more concentration, with more self-criticism, he might have done ampler service to a literature which, as it was, he adorned with at least one unquestionable masterpiece.

GILES FLETCHER (1588?-1623) was son of Dr. Giles Fletcher, who served Queen Elizabeth as commissioner in the Low Countries and as ambassador to Russia; brother of Phineas Fletcher, author of the *Purple Island*, and first cousin of John Fletcher the dramatist. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where, in 1603, he contributed a canto to a poem

entitled *Sorrow's Joy*, published by the University on the death of Elizabeth and the accession of James I. In 1610 he published *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, the only poem by which his name is remembered. He was Rector of Alderton in Suffolk, and died there 1623.

CHRIST'S VICTORY AND TRIUMPH

Description of Mercy, from *Christ's Victory in Heaven*

If any ask why roses please the sight?
 Because their leaves upon thy cheeks do bower:
 If any ask why lilies are so white?
 Because their blossoms in thy hand do flower:
 Or why sweet plants so grateful odours shower?
 It is because thy breath so like they be:
 Or why the orient sun so bright we see?
 What reason can we give, but from thine eyes, and thee?
 Rosed all in lively crimson are thy cheeks,
 Where beauties indeflourishing abide, 10
 And, as to pass his fellow either seeks,
 Seems both do blush at one another's pride;
 And on thine eyelids, waiting thee beside,
 Ten thousand graces sit, and when they move
 To earth their amorous belgards¹ from above
 They fly from heaven, and on their wings convey thy love.

If any wander, thou dost call him back;
 If any be not forward, thou incitest him;
 Thou dost expect, if any should grow slack;
 If any seem but willing, thou invitest him; 20
 Or if he do offend thee, thou acquittest him;
 Thou findest the lost, and followest him that flies,
 Healing the sick, and quickening him that dies,
 Thou art the lame man's friendly staff, the blind man's eyes.

¹ i.e. kind looks. The passage seems to be copied from *Faery Queene*, II. iii. 25.

So fair thou art, that all would thee behold ;
But none can thee behold, thou art so fair ;
Pardon, O pardon then thy vassal bold,
That with poor shadows strives thee to compare,
And match the things which he knows matchless are.

Thou, O vive mirror of celestial grace, 30

How can frail colours portray out thy face,
Or paint in flesh thy beauty, in such semblance base ?

Her upper garment was a silken lawn,
With needlework richly embroiderèd,
Which she herself with her own hand had drawn,
And all the world therein had portrayèd,
With threads so fresh and lively colourèd

That seemed the world she new created there,

• And the mistaken eyes would rashly swear
The silken trees did grow, and the beasts living were. 40

Low at her feet the earth was cast alone
(As though to kiss her foot it did aspire
And gave itself for her to tread upon),
With so unlike and different attire,
That every one that saw it did admire

What it might be was of so various hue ;

For to itself it oft so diverse grew,
That still it seemed the same, and still it seemed a new.

And here and there few men she scatterèd,
(That in their thought esteem the world but small, 50
And themselves great) but she with one fine thread
So short, and small, and slender, wove them all,
That like a sort of busy ants that crawl

About some molehill, so they wanderèd ;

And round about, the waving sea was shed :
But, for the silver sands, small pearls were sprinkled.

About her head a cypres heaven she wore,
Spread like a veil upheld with silver wire,
In which the stars so burnt in golden ore,
As seemed the azure web was all on fire : 60
But hastily, to quench the sparkling ire
 A flood of milk came rolling up the shore,
 And on his curded wave swift Argus bore,
And the immortal swan that did her life deplore.

Yet strange it was so many stars to see,
Without a sun to give their tapers light :
Yet strange it was not that it so should be ;
For, where the sun centres himself by right, •
Her face and locks did flame, that at the sight
 The heavenly veil, that else should nimbly move, 70
 Forgot his flight, and all encensed with love,
With wonder, and amazement, did her beauty prove.

Over her hung a canopy of state,
Not of rich tissue, nor of spangled gold,
But of a substance, though not animate,
Yet of a heavenly and spiritual mould,
That only eyes of spirits might behold ;
 Such light as from main rocks of diamond,
 Shooting their sparks at Phoebus, would rebound,
And little angels holding hands, danced all around. 80

WILLIAM BROWNE (1591-1643 ?) was born at Tavistock and educated at Exeter College, Oxford. On leaving the University he went to the Inner Temple, where, in 1613, he published the first book of *Britannia's Pastorals*. In 1614 he produced, at the Inner Temple, a masque entitled *Ulysses and Circe*, and published a set of seven eclogues, the *Shepherd's Pipe*. Two years later appeared the second book of *Britannia's Pastorals* ; both books were republished together in 1625, in which year he was admitted M.A. of Oxford, and, after a short period of

residence at his old College, took up his abode at Wilton, where he had an estate. His only other works were a collection of miscellaneous poems (including the *Lydford Journey*) and a third book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, which was left unpublished at his death, and, indeed, was not printed until 1852, when the MS. was discovered at Salisbury. Towards the end of his life he returned to Devonshire, and he died, probably at Tavistock, about 1643.

BRITANNIA'S PASTORALS

Book I, Song III

Two nights thus passed : the lily-handed Morn
 Saw Phoebus stealing dew from Ceres' corn.
 The mounting lark (day's herald) got on wing,
 Bidding each bird choose out his bough and sing.
 The lofty treble sung the little wren,
 Robin the mean, that best of all loves men ;
 The nightingale the tenor, and the thrush
 The counter-tenor sweetly, in a bush.
 And that the music might be full in parts
 Birds from the groves flew with right willing hearts ; 10
 But (as it seem'd) they thought (as do the swains
 Which tune their pipes on sack'd Hibernia's plains)
 There should some droning part be, therefore will'd
 Some bird to fly into a neighb'ring field
 In embassy unto the King of Bees,
 To aid his partners on the flowers and trees,
 Who condescending, gladly flew along
 To bear the bass to his well-tuned song.
 The crow was willing they should be beholding
 For his deep voice, but being hoarse with scolding, 20
 He thus lends aid ; upon an oak doth climb,
 And nodding with his head, so keepeth time.

Book I, Song IV

IN winter's time, when hardly fed the flocks,
 And icicles hung dangling on the rocks ;
 When Hyems bound the floods in silver chains,
 And hoary frosts had candied all the plains ;
 When every barn rung with the threshing flails,
 And shepherd boys for cold 'gan blow their nails :
 Wearied with toil in seeking out some one
 That had a spark of true devotion,
 It was my chance (chance only helpeth need)
 To find an house y-built for holy deed, 10
 With goodly architect, and cloisters wide,
 With groves and walks along a river's side ;
 The place itself afforded admiration,
 And every spray a theme of contemplation.
 But (woe is me !) when, knocking at the gate,
 I 'gan entreat an enterance thereat,
 The porter asked my name : I told ; he swell'd,
 And bade me thence : wherewith in grief repell'd,
 I sought for shelter to a ruin'd house,
 Harb'ring the weasel and the dust-bred mouse ; 20
 And others none, except the two-kind bat
 Which all the day there melancholy sat ;
 Here sat I down, with wind and rain y-beat ;
 Grief fed my mind, and did my body eat.

Book I, Song V

THEN, as a nimble squirrel from the wood,
 Ranging the hedges for his filbert-food,
 Sits peartly on a bough, his brown nuts cracking,
 And from the shell the sweet white kernel taking,
 Till with their crooks and bags a sort of boys
 To share with him come with so great a noise
 That he is forc'd to leave a nut nigh broke
 And for his life leaps to a neighbour oak,

Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes ;
 Whilst through the quagmires and red water splashes 10
 The boys run dabbling thorough thick and thin ;
 One tears his hose, another breaks his shin ;
 This, torn and tatter'd, hath with much ado
 Got by the briars ; and that hath lost his shoe ;
 This drops his band ; that headlong falls for haste ;
 Another cries behind for being last ;
 With sticks and stones and many a sounding holloa,
 The little fool, with no small sport, they follow,
 Whilst he, from tree to tree, from spray to spray,
 Gets to the wood and hides him in his dray¹ : 20
 Such shift made Riot ere he could get up,
 And so from bough to bough he won the top,
 Though hindrances, for ever coming there,
 Were often thrust upon him by Despair.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND (1585-1649), son of Sir John Drummond, was born at Hawthornden and educated at Edinburgh. On leaving the University he studied law at Bruges, and, after a visit to France, returned to Scotland in 1609. In 1613 he published *Meliades*, an elegy on the death of Prince Henry, and in 1616 a volume of miscellaneous poems, some of which (including the Madrigal and the Sonnet here quoted) were inspired by the death of Mary Cunningham, to whom he was betrothed. In 1617 he wrote a panegyric, entitled *Forth Feasting*, to celebrate King James's visit to Edinburgh, and in 1623 a collection of sacred poems called *Flowers of Sion*. He was a friend of Ben Jonson, who visited him at Hawthornden, and of whose conversation he has left a record. In 1623 he again went abroad and travelled in France, Germany, and Italy. Shortly after his return, in 1632, he married Elizabeth Logan ; and in 1633, when Charles I came to Edinburgh, wrote a masque in his honour. During the Civil War he was a staunch Royalist, and his death, in 1649, is said to have been accelerated by the news of the king's execution.

¹ The old name for a squirrel's nest.

MADRIGAL

DEAR night, the ease of care,
 Untroubled seat of peace,
 Time's eldest child, which oft the blind do see,
 On this our hemisphere
 What makes thee now so sadly dark to be?
 Com'st thou in funeral pomp her grave to grace,
 Or do those stars which should thy honour clear
 In Jove's high hall advise
 In what part of the skies
 With them or Cynthia she shall appear?
 Or, ah, alas! because those matchless eyes
 Which shone so fair below thou dost not find,
 Striv'st thou to make all other eyes look blind?

10

SONNET

As in a dusky and tempestuous night
 A star is wont to spread her locks of gold,
 And while her pleasant rays abroad are roll'd,
 Some spiteful cloud doth rob us of her sight,
 Fair soul, in this black age so shin'dst thou bright,
 And made all eyes with wonder thee behold,
 Till ugly Death, depriving us of light,
 In his grim misty arms thee did enfold.
 Who more shall vaunt true beauty here to see?
 What hope doth more in any heart remain
 That such perfection shall his reason reign
 If Beauty, with thee born, too died with thee?
 World, 'plain no more of Love, nor count his harms;
 With his pale trophies Death hath hung his arms.

10

O LUX BEATA TRINITAS

O TRINITY, O blessed light,
 O Unity most principal,
 The fiery sun now leaves our sight,
 Cause in our hearts thy beams to fall.

Let us with songs of praise divine
 At morn and evening thee implore,
 And let our glory, bow'd to thine,
 Thee glorify for evermore.

SONG

• PHOEBUS, arise,
 • And paint the sable skies
 With azure, white, and red ;
 Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed,
 That she thy carrier may with roses spread.
 The nightingales thy coming each where sing ;
 Make an eternal spring,
 Give life to this dark world which lieth dead ;
 Spread forth thy golden hair
 In larger locks than thou wast wont before, 10
 And, emperor-like, decore
 With diadem of pearl thy temples fair :
 Chase hence the ugly night,
 Which serves but to make dear thy glorious light.
 Thine is that happy morn,
 That day, long-wish'd day,
 Of all my life so dark
 (If cruel stars have not my ruin sworn,
 And fates not hope betray),
 Which, only white, deserves 20
 A diamond for ever should it mark :

This is the morn should bring unto this grove
 My love, to hear and recompense my love.
 Fair king, who all preserves,
 But show thy blushing beams,
 And thou two sweeter eyes
 Shalt see than those which by Peneus' streams
 Did once thy heart surprise ¹;
 Nay, suns, which shine as clear
 As thou, when two thou didst to Rome appear. 30
 Now, Flora, deck thyself in fairest guise:
 If that ye, winds, would hear
 A voice surpassing far Amphion's lyre,
 Your stormy chiding stay:
 Let zephyr only breathe
 And with her tresses play,
 Kissing sometimes those purple ports of death.
 The winds all silent are,
 And Phoebus in his chair,
 Ensaffroning sea and air, 40
 Makes vanish every star:
 Night like a drunkard reels
 Beyond the hills, to shun his flaming wheels;
 The fields with flowers are deck'd in every hue,
 The clouds bespangle with bright gold their blue:
 Here is the pleasant place,
 And ev'rything save her who all should grace.

GEORGE CHAPMAN (1559?-1634) was born at Hitchin in Hertfordshire, and educated at Trinity College, Oxford. His first-known poem, the *Shadow of Night*, appeared in 1594, and was followed next year by *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*. In 1598 he published his translation of the first seven books of the *Iliad*, on which he continued to work, in spite of his indefatigable activity as a dramatist, until in 1611 the whole work was

¹ The story of Apollo and Daphne, Ovid, *Met.* i. 452.

completed. The *Odyssey* appeared in 1614-15, and was followed by translations of *Musaeus* (1616), *Hesiod* (1618), and the *Homeric Hymns*, &c. (about 1624).

FROM 'THE CHARIOT RACE'

(*Iliad* xxiii. 352-441)

..... ALL leapt to chariot,
 And every man then, for the start, cast in his proper lot.
 Achilles drew: Antilochus the lot set foremost forth,
 Eumelus next, Atrides third, Meriones the fourth,
 The fifth and last was Diomed, far first in excellence.
 • All stood in order, and the lists Achilles fixed far thence
 In plain field; and a seat ordained fast by, in which he set
 • Renowned Phoenix, that in grace of Peleus was so great,
 To see the race, and give a truth of all their passages.
 All start together, scourg'd and cried, and gave their
 business 10
 Study and order. Through the field they held a winged
 pace:
 Beneath the bosom of their steeds a dust so dimmed the
 race
 It stood above their heads in clouds, or like to storms
 amazed;
 Manes flew like ensigns with the wind: the chariots
 sometimes grazed,
 And sometimes jumped up to the air, yet still sat fast
 the men,
 Their spirits even panting in their breasts with fervour to
 obtain:
 But when they turned to fleet again, then all men's skills
 were tried,
 Then stretched the pasterns of their steeds. Eumelus'
 horse in pride

Still bore their sovereign: after them came Diomed's
 coursers close,
 Still apt to leap their chariot, and ready to repose 20
 Upon the shoulders of the king¹ their heads: his back
 even burned
 With fire that from their nostrils flew. And then their
 lord had turned
 The race for him or given it doubt if Phoebus had not smit
 The scourge out of his hands; and tears of helpless
 wrath with it
 From forth his eyes, to see his horse for want of scourge
 made slow,
 And th' others (by Apollo's help) with much more swift-
 ness go.
 Apollo's spite Pallas discerned and flew to Tydeus' son²,
 His scourge reached, and his horse made fresh: then took
 her angry run
 At king Eumelus, brake his gears—his mares on both
 sides flew,
 His draught-tree fell to earth, and him the tossed-up
 chariot threw 30
 Down to the earth, his elbows torn, his forehead, all his
 face
 Struck at the centre, his speech lost. And thus the
 turned race
 Fell to Tydides: before all his conquering horse he drave
 And first he glittered in the race: divine Athene gave
 Strength to his horse and fame to him. Next him drave
 Sparta's king³.
 Antilochus his father's horse⁴ then urged with all his sting

¹ The first edition has 'their king', an obvious misprint. Eumelus in the foremost chariot is touched by the heads of Diomed's horses in the second.

² Menelaus, son of Atreus (Atrides).

³ i.e. Diomed.

⁴ Antilochus was driving the horses of his father, Nestor.

Of scourge and voice: 'Run low,' said he, 'stretch out
your limbs and fly,
With Diomed's horse I bid not strive, nor with himself
strive I.

Athene wings his horse and him renowns. Atrides'
steeds

Are they ye must not fail but reach, and soon, lest
soon succeeds 40

The blot of all your fame, to yield in swiftness to a mare,
The female Æthe. What's the cause, ye best that ever
were,

That thus ye fail us? Be assured that Nestor's love ye lose

• For ever if ye fail his son; through both your both sides
goes

• His hot steel if ye suffer me to bring the last prize home.
Haste, overtake them instantly; we needs must overcome
This harsh way next us¹; this my mind will take, this
I despise

For peril, this I'll creep through; hard the way to honour
lies,

And that take I, and that shall yield.' His horse by all
this knew

He was not pleased, and feared his voice, and for a while
they flew. 50

But straight more clear appeared the strait Antilochus
foresaw:

It was a gasp the earth gave, forced by humours cold and
raw

Poured out of Winter's watery breast, met there, and
cleaving deep

All that near passage to the lists. This Nestor's son
would leap,

¹ A watercourse cutting a corner of the road: described
in ll. 51-4.

And left the roadway, being about. Atrides feared and
cried :

‘Antilochus, thy course is mad, contain thy horse, we ride
A way most dangerous ; turn head, betime take larger
field ;

We shall be splitted.’ Nestor’s son with much more
scourge impelled

His horse for this as if not heard, and got as far before
As any youth can cast a quoit. Atrides would no more, 60
He backed again, for fear, himself : his goodly chariot
And horse together strewed the dust, in being so dusty hot
Of thirsted conquest. But he chid, at parting, passing
sore :

‘Antilochus,’ said he, ‘a worse than thee earth never bore.
Farewell : we never thought thee wise, that were wise ;’
but not so

Without oaths shall the wreath, be sure, crown thy mad
temples. Go.’

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1568-1631) was born at Harthill in Warwickshire, and was for some time maintained at Oxford by Sir Henry Godere, of Polsworth. In 1591 he began his career with a sacred poem, the *Harmonie of the Church* ; in 1593 followed the set of eclogues entitled the *Shepherd’s Mirrour* ; next year he printed *Idea’s Mirrour*, a set of sonnets the finest of which has been quoted on p. 291. For a short time after this he turned his attention to historical poems, and produced in over-rapid succession *Matilda* (1596), *The Barons’ Wars* (1596 and 1598), and *England’s Heroical Epistles* (1598)—the last on the model of Ovid’s *Heroides*. In 1607 followed his poem on the Earl of Essex, revised two years later ; and in 1613 the *Polyolbion*, a poetical description of England in about 16,000
• *Alexandrine verses*. His last work, *Nymphidia, or the Court of Faery*, was written in 1627, four years before his death.

FROM 'NYMPHIDIA'

Pigwiggan prepares for the fight with King Oberon.

[HE] quickly arms him for the field,
A little cockle-shell his shield,
Which he could very bravely wield,
Yet could it not be piercèd ;
His spear a bent both stiff and strong,
And well near of two inches long :
The pile was of a horse-fly's tongue,
Whose sharpness nought reversèd.

And puts him on a coat of mail,
Which was of a fish's scale,
That when his foe should him assail,

10

No point should be prevailing.
His rapier was a hornet's sting ;
It was a very dangerous thing,
For if he chanced to hurt the king
It would be long in healing.

His helmet was a beetle's head,
Most horrible and full of dread,
That able was to strike one dead,

Yet it did well become him ;
And for a plume a horse's hair
Which, being tossèd with the air,
Had force to strike his foe with fear,
And turn his weapon from him.

20

Himself he on an earwig set,
Yet scarce he on his back could get,
So oft and high he did curvèt

Ere he himself could settle :
He made him turn, and stop, and bound,
To gallop, and to trot the round : 30
He scarce could stand on any ground
He was so full of mettle.

BALLAD OF AGINCOURT

FAIR stood the wind for France
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry ;
But putting to the main
At Kaux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnish'd in warlike sort, 10
Marcheth towards Agincourt
In happy hour ;
Skirmishing day by day
With those that stopp'd his way.
Where the French gen'ral lay
With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide
To the king sending ; 20
Which he neglects the while
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then :
' Though they to one be ten

Be not amazed :

Yet have we well begun ;
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun

By fame been raised.

30

' And for myself (quoth he)
This my full rest shall be,
England ne'er mourn for me

Nor more esteem me :

Victor I will remain
Or on this earth lie slain,
Never shall she sustain

Loss to redeem me.

40

' Poitiers and Cressy tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell :

No less our skill is

Than when our grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat

Lopp'd the French lilies.'

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vaward led ;

50

With the main Henry sped
Amongst his henchmen ;

Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there—
O Lord, how hot they were
On the false Frenchmen.

They now to fight are gone :
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan —

To hear was wonder.
That with the cries they make
The very earth did shake ;
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder.

60

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
To our hid forces ;
When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly
The English archery
Stuck the French horses,

70

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
Piercing the weather ;
None from his fellow starts,
But, playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
Stuck close together.

80

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilboes drew,
And on the French they flew,
Not one was tardy ;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went,
Our men were hardy.

This while our noble king,
His broad-sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding

90

As to o'erwhelm it ;
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
Bruised his helmet.

Gloster, that Duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood
With his brave brother ;
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
Scarce such another.

100

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made
Still as they ran up :
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily,
Ferrers and Fanhope.

110

Upon Saint Crispin's day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
To England to carry :
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry !

120

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